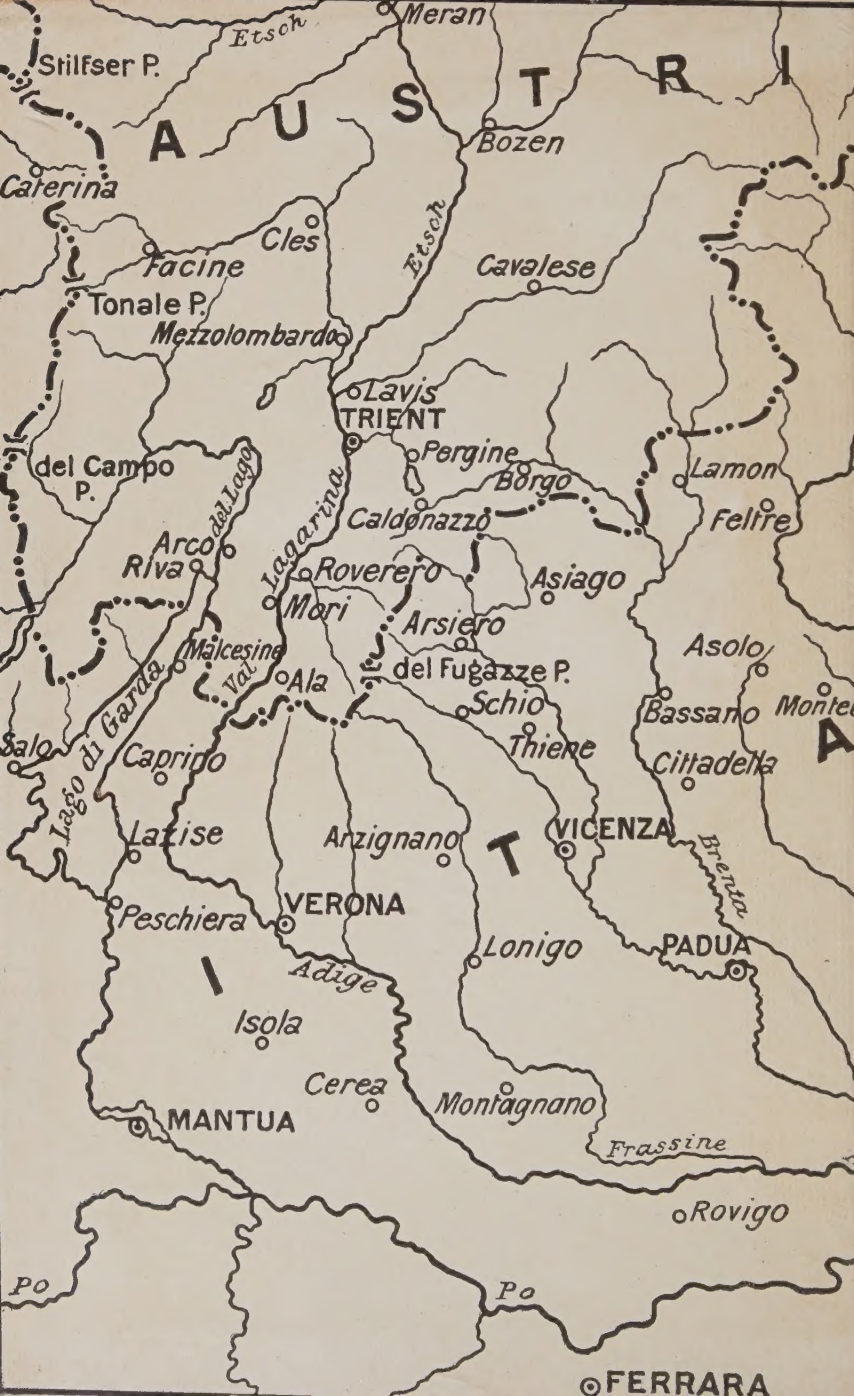

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Parenzo
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POLA

VOLUME IV

ITALY AT WAR

Jeffrey Forrest Huntsman

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The King of Italy and the Prince of Wales.

When the Prince was on the Italian front, he asked permission to visit a trench which was being heavily shelled. The King bluntly refused. "I want no historic incidents here," he remarked dryly.

THE WAR ON ALL FRONTS

ITALY AT WAR

AND THE ALLIES IN THE WEST

BY

E. ALEXANDER POWELL

CORRESPONDENT OF THE "NEW YORK WORLD"
AND NOW CAPTAIN IN THE NATIONAL ARMY

ILLUSTRATED

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1919

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E. Alexander Powell.

Washington,
April fifteenth, 1917.

TO

THEIR EXCELLENCIES

COUNT V. MACCHI DI CELLERE, AMBASSADOR OF ITALY,
AND JEAN JULES JUSSERAND, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE

IN APPRECIATION OF THE MANY
KINDNESSES THEY HAVE SHOWN
ME AND IN ADMIRATION OF THE
TACT, SINCERITY, AND ABILITY
WHICH HAVE WON FOR THEM,
AND FOR THE COUNTRIES THEY
REPRESENT, THE FRIENDSHIP AND
CONFIDENCE OF ALL AMERICANS

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These illustrations are from photographs taken by the Photographic Sections of the Italian, French, British, and Belgian armies and by the author.

ITALY AT WAR

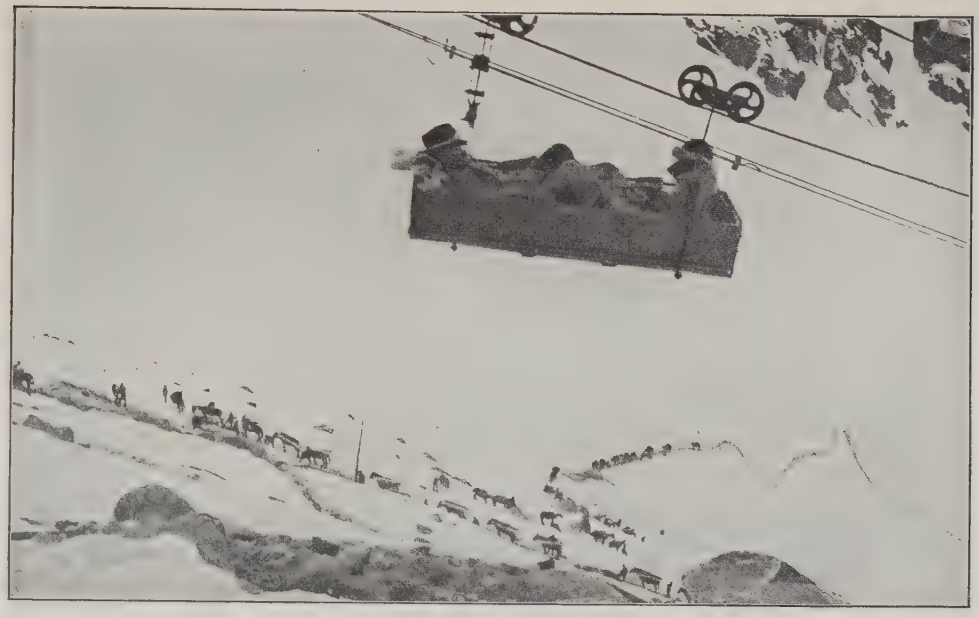
I

THE WAY TO THE WAR

WHEN I told my friends that I was going to the Italian front they smiled disdainfully. "You will only be wasting your time," one of them warned me. "There isn't anything doing there," said another. And when I came back they greeted me with "You didn't see much, did you?" and "What are the Italians doing, anyway?"

If I had time I told them that Italy is holding a front which is longer than the French and British and Belgian fronts combined (trace it out on the map and you will find that it measures more than four hundred and fifty miles); that, alone among the Allies, she is doing most of her fighting on the enemy's soil; that she is fighting an army which was fourth in Europe in numbers, third in quality, and probably second in equipment; that in a single battle she

lost more men than fell on both sides at Gettysburg; that she has taken 100,000 prisoners; that, to oppose the Austrian offensive in the Trentino, she mobilized a new army of half a million men, completely equipped it, and moved it to the front, all in seven days; that, were her trench lines carefully ironed out, they would extend as far as from New York to Salt Lake City; that, instead of digging these trenches, she has had to blast most of them from the solid rock; that she has mounted 8-inch guns on ice-ledges nearly two miles above sea-level, in positions to which a skilled mountaineer would find it perilous to climb; that in places the infantry has advanced by driving iron pegs and rings into the perpendicular walls of rock and swarming up the dizzy ladders thus constructed; that many of the positions can be reached only in baskets slung from sagging wires stretched across mile-deep chasms; that many of her soldiers are living like arctic explorers, in caverns of ice and snow; that on the sun-scorched floor of the



The *Teleferica.*

"Many of the Italian positions can be reached only in baskets slung from sagging wires stretched across mile-deep chasms."

An Italian Position in the Carnia.

"Many of the Italian soldiers are living like arctic explorers, in caverns of ice and snow."

Carso the bodies of the dead have frequently been found baked hard and mummified, while in the mountains they have been found stiff, too, but stiff from cold; that in the lowlands of the Isonzo the soldiers have fought in water to their waists, while the water for the armies fighting in the Trentino has had to be brought up from thousands of feet below; and, most important of all, that she has kept engaged some forty Austrian divisions (about 750,000 men) —a force sufficient to have turned the scale in favor of the Central Powers on any of the other fronts. And I have usually added: "After what I have seen over there, I feel like lifting my hat, in respect and admiration, to the next Italian that I see."

It is no exaggeration to say that not one American in a thousand has any adequate conception of what Italy is fighting for, nor any appreciation of the splendid part she is playing in the war. This lack of knowledge, and the consequent lack of interest, is, however, primarily due to the Italians themselves. They

are suspicious of foreigners. They are by nature shy. More insular than the French or English, they are only just commencing to realize the political value of our national maxim: "It pays to advertise." Though they want publicity they do not know how to get it. Instead of welcoming neutral correspondents and publicists, they have, until very recently, met them with suspicion and hinderances. What little news is permitted to filter through is coldly official, and is altogether unsuited for American consumption. The Italians are staging one of the most remarkable and inspiring performances that I have seen on any front—a performance of which they have every reason to be proud—but diffidence and conservatism have deterred them from telling the world about it.

To visit Italy in these days is no longer merely a matter of buying a ticket and boarding a train. To comply with the necessary formalities takes the better part of a week. Should you, an American, wish to travel from

Paris to Rome, for example, you must first of all obtain from the American consul-general a special visé for Italy, together with a statement of the day and hour on which you intend to leave Paris, the frontier station at which you will enter Italy, and the cities which you propose visiting. The consul-general will require of you three *carte-de-visite* size photographs. Armed with your viséd passport, you must then present yourself at the Italian Consulate where several suave but very businesslike gentlemen will subject you to a series of extremely searching questions. And you can be perfectly certain that they are in possession of enough information about you to check up your answers. Should it chance that your grandfather's name was Schmidt, or something equally German-sounding, it is all off. The Italians, I repeat, are a suspicious folk, and they are taking no chances. Moreover, unless you are able to convince them of the imperative necessity of your visiting Italy, you do not go. Tourists and sensation seekers are not wanted in Italy in

these times; the railways are needed for other purposes. If, however, you succeed in satisfying the board of examiners that you are not likely to be either a menace or a nuisance, a special passport for the journey will be issued you. Three more photographs, please. This passport must then be indorsed at the Prefecture of Police. (*Votre photographie, s'il vous plait.*) Should you neglect to obtain the police visé you will not be permitted to board the train.

Upon reaching the frontier you are ushered before a board composed of officials of the French *Service de Sûrété* and the Italian *Questura* and again subjected to a searching interrogatory. Every piece of luggage in the train is unloaded, opened, and carefully examined. It having been discovered that spies were accustomed to conceal in their compartments any papers which they might be carrying, and retrieving them after the frontier was safely passed, the through trains have now been discontinued, passengers and luggage, after the

examination at the frontier, being sent on by another train. In addition to the French and Italian secret-service officials, there are now on duty at the various frontier stations, and likewise in Athens, Naples, and Rome, keen-eyed young officers of the "Hush-Hush Brigade," as the British Intelligence Department is disrespectfully called, whose business it is to scrutinize the thousands of British subjects — officers returning from India, Egypt, or Salonika, or from service with the Mediterranean fleet, King's messengers, diplomatic couriers— who are constantly crossing Italy on their way to or from England.

That the arm of the enemy is very long, and that it is able to strike at astounding distances and in the most unexpected places, is brought sharply home to one as the train pulls out of the Genoa station. From Genoa to Pisa, a distance of a hundred miles, the railway closely hugs the Mediterranean shore. At night all the curtains on that side of the train must be kept closely drawn and, as an additional precaution,

the white electric-light bulbs in the corridors and compartments have been replaced by violet ones. If you ask the reason for this you are usually met with evasions. But, if you persist, you learn that it is done to avoid the danger of the trains being shelled by Austrian submarines! (Imagine, if you please, the passengers on the New York-Boston trains being ordered to keep their windows darkened because enemy submarines have been reported off the coast.) In this war remoteness from the firing-line does not assure safety. Spezia, for example, which is a naval base of the first importance, is separated from the firing-line by the width of the Italian peninsula. Until a few months ago its inhabitants felt as snug and safe as though they lived in Spain. Then, one night, an Austrian airman crossed the Alps, winged his way above the Lombard plain, and let loose on Spezia a rain of bombs which caused many deaths and did enormous damage.

Even the casual traveller in Italy to-day cannot fail to be struck by the prosperity which

the war has brought to the great manufacturing cities of the north as contrasted with the commercial stagnation which prevails in the southern provinces of the kingdom. In the munition plants, most of which are in the north, are employed upward of half a million workers, of whom 75,000 are women. Genoa, Milan, and Turin are a-boom with industry. The great automobile factories have expanded amazingly in order to meet the demand for shells, field-guns, and motor-trucks. Turin, as an officer smilingly remarked, "now consists of the Fiat factory and a few houses." The United States is not the only country to produce that strange breed known as munitions millionaires. Italy has them also—and the jewellers and champagne agents are doing a bigger business than they have ever done before.

As the train tears southward into Tuscany you begin to catch fleeting glimpses of the men who are making possible this sudden prosperity—the men who are using the motor-trucks

and the shells and the field-guns. *They* don't look very prosperous or very happy. Sometimes you see them drawn up on the platforms of wayside stations, shivering beneath their scanty capes in the chill of an Italian dawn. Usually there is a background of wet-eyed women, with shawls drawn over their heads, and nearly always with babies in their arms. And on nearly every siding were standing long trains of box-cars, bedded with straw and filled with these same wiry, brown-faced little men in their rat-gray uniforms, being hurried to the fighting in the north. It reminded me of those long cattle-trains one sees in the Middle West, bound for the Chicago slaughter-houses.

Rome in war-time is about as cheerful as Coney Island in midwinter. Empty are the enticing little shops on the Piazza di Spagna. Gone from the marble steps are the artists' models and the flower-girls. To visit the galleries of the Vatican is to stroll through an echoing marble tomb. The guards and custodians no longer welcome you for the sake of

your tips, but for the sake of your company. The King, who is with the army, visits Rome only rarely; the Queen occupies a modest villa in the country; the Palace of the Quirinal has been turned into a hospital. The great ball-room, the state dining-room, the throne-room, even the Queen's sun-parlor, are now filled with white cots, hundreds and hundreds of them, each with its bandaged occupant, while in the famous gardens where Popes and Emperors and Kings have strolled, convalescent soldiers now laze in the sun or on the gravelled paths play at bowls. In giving up their home for the use of the wounded, the King and Queen have done a very generous and noble thing, and the Italian people are not going to forget it.

If Rome, which is the seat of government, shows such unmistakable signs of depression, imagine the stagnation of Florence, which has long been as dependent upon its crop of tourists as a Dakota farmer is upon his crop of wheat. The Cascine Gardens, in the old days

one of the gayest promenades in Europe, are as lonely as a cemetery. At those hotels on the Lung' Arno, which remain open, the visitor can make his own terms. The Via Tornabuoni is as quiet as a street in a country town. The dealers in antiques, in souvenirs, in pictures, in marbles, have most of them put up their shutters and disappeared, to return, no doubt, in happier times.

There is in the Via Tornabuoni, midway between Giacosa's and the American Consulate, an excellent barber shop. The owner, who learned his trade in the United States, is the most skilful man with scissors and razor that I know. His customers came from half the countries of the globe.

"But they are all gone now," he told me sadly. "Some are fighting, some have been killed, the others have gone back to their homes until the war is over. Three years ago I had as nice a little business as a man could ask for. To-day I do not make enough to pay my rent. But it doesn't make much difference, for

next month my class is called to the colors, and in the spring my son, who will then be eighteen, will also have to go."

No, they're not very enthusiastic over the war in Florence. But you can't blame them, can you?

In none of the great cities known and loved by Americans has the war wrought such startling changes as in Venice. Because it is a naval base of the first importance, because it is almost within sight of the Austrian coast, and therefore within easy striking distance of Trieste, Fiume, and Pola, and because throughout Venetia Austrian spies abound, Venice is a closed city. It reminded me of a beautiful playhouse which had been closed for an indefinite period: the fire-curtain lowered, the linen covers drawn over the seats, the carpets rolled up, the scenery stored away, the great stage empty and desolate. Gone are the lights, the music, the merriment which made Venice one of the happiest and most care free of cities.

Because of the frequent air raids—Venice has been attacked from the sky nearly a hundred times since the war began—the city is put to bed promptly at nightfall. To show a light from a door or window after dark is to invite a domiciliary visit from the police and, quite possibly, arrest on the charge of attempting to communicate with the enemy. The illumination of the streets is confined to small candle-power lights in blue or purple bulbs, the weakened rays being visible for only a short distance. To stroll at night in the darkened streets is to risk falling into a canal, while the use of an electric torch would almost certainly result in arrest as a spy. The ghastly effect produced by the purple lights, the utter blackness of the canals, the deathly silence, broken only by the sound of water lapping the walls of the empty palazzos, combine to give the city a peculiarly weird and sepulchral appearance.

Of the great hotels which line the Canale Grande, only the Danieli remains open. Over the others fly the Red Cross flags, and in their

windows and on their terraces lounge wounded soldiers. The smoking-room of the Danieli, where so many generations of travelling Americans have chatted over their coffee and cigars, has been converted into a *rifugio,* in which the guests can find shelter in case of an air attack. A bomb-proof ceiling has been made of two layers of steel rails, laid crosswise, and ramparts of sand-bags have been built against the walls. On the doors of the bedrooms are posted notices urging the guests, when hostile aircraft are reported, to make directly for the *rifugio,* and remain there until the raid is over. In other cities in the war zone the inhabitants take to their cellars during aerial attacks, but in Venice there are no cellars, and the buildings are, for the most part, too old and poorly built to afford safety from bombs. To provide adequate protection for the population, particularly in the poorer and more congested districts of the city, has, therefore, proved a serious problem for the authorities. Owing to its situation, Venice is extremely vulnerable to air

attacks, for the Austrian seaplanes, operating from Trieste or Pola, can glide across the Adriatic under cover of darkness, and are over the city before their presence is discovered. Before the anti-aircraft guns can get their range, or the Italian airmen can rise and engage them, they have dropped their bombs and fled. Although, generally speaking, the loss of life resulting from these aerial forays is surprising small, they are occasionally very serious affairs. During an air raid on Padua, which occurred a few days before I was there, a bomb exploded in the midst of a crowd of terrified townspeople who were struggling to gain entrance to a *rifugio*. In that affair 153 men, women, and children lost their lives.

The admiral in command of Venice showed me a map of the city, which, with the exception of a large rectangle, was thickly sprinkled with small red dots. There must have been several hundred of them.

"These dots," he explained, "indicate where Austrian bombs have fallen."

"This part of the city seems to have been peculiarly fortunate," I remarked, placing my finger on the white square.

"That," said he, "is the Arsenal. For obvious reasons we do not reveal whether any bombs have fallen there."

Considering the frequency with which Venice has been attacked from the air, its churches, of which there are an extraordinary number, have escaped with comparatively little damage. Only four, in fact, have suffered seriously. Of these, the church of Santa Maria Formosa has sustained the greatest damage, its magnificent interior, with the celebrated decorations by Palma Vecchio, having been transformed through the agency of an Austrian bomb, into a heap of stone and plaster. Another bomb chose as its target the great dome of the church of San Pietro di Castello, which stands on the island of San Pietro, opposite the Arsenal. On the Grand Canal, close by the railway-station, is the Chiesa degli Scalzi, whose ceiling by Tiepolo, one of the master's greatest works, has

suffered irreparable injury. Santi Giovanni e Páolo, next to St. Mark's the most famous church in Venice, has also been shattered by a bomb.

I asked the officer in command of the aerial defenses of Venice if he thought that the Austrian airmen intentionally bomb churches, hospitals, and monuments, as has been so often asserted in the Allied press.

"It's this way," he explained. "A dozen aviators are ordered to bombard a certain city. Three or four of them are real heroes and, at the risk of their lives, descend low enough to make certain of their targets before releasing their bombs. The others, however, rather than come within range of the anti-aircraft guns, remain at a safe height, drop their bombs at random as soon as they are over the city, and then clear out. Is it very surprising, then, that bombs dropped from a height of perhaps ten thousand feet, by aircraft travelling sixty miles an hour, miss the forts and barracks for which

they are intended and hit churches and dwellings instead?"

Intentional or not, the bombardment of the Venetian churches is a blunder for which the Austrians will pay dearly in loss of international good-will. A century hence these shattered churches will be pointed out to visitors as the work of the modern Vandals, and lovers of art and beauty throughout the world will execrate the nation which permitted the sacrilege. They have destroyed glass and paintings and sculptures that were a joy to the whole world, they have undone the work of saints and heroes and masters, and they have gained no corresponding military advantage. In every city which has been subjected to air raids the inhabitants have been made more obstinate, more iron-hard in their determination to keep on fighting. The sight of shattered churches, of wrecked dwellings, of mangled women and dead babies, does not terrify or dismay a people: it infuriates them. In the words of

Talleyrand: "It is worse than a crime; it is a mistake."

The strangest sight in Venice to-day is St. Mark's. There is nothing in its present appearance, inside or out, to suggest the famous cathedral which so many millions of people have reverenced and loved. Indeed, there is little about it to suggest a church at all. It looks like a huge and ugly warehouse, like a car barn, like a Billy Sunday tabernacle, for, in order to protect the wonderful mosaics and marbles which adorn the church's western façade, it has been sheathed, from ground to roof, with unpainted planks, and these, in turn, have been covered with great squares of asbestos. By this use of fire-proof material it is hoped that, even should the church be hit by a bomb, there may be averted a fire such as did irreparable damage to the Cathedral of Rheims.

The famous bronze horses have been removed from their place over the main portal of St. Mark's, and taken, I believe, to Florence. It

is not the first travelling that they have done, for from the triumphal arch of Nero they once looked down on ancient Rome. Constantine sent them to adorn the imperial hippodrome which he built in Constantinople, whence the Doge Dandolo brought them as spoils of war to Venice when the thirteenth century was still young. In 1797 Napoleon carried them to Paris, but after the downfall of the Emperor they were brought back to Venice by the Austrians and restored to their ancient position. There they remained for just a hundred years, until the menace of the Austrian aircraft necessitated their hasty removal to a place of safety. Of them one of Napoleon's generals is said to have remarked disparagingly: "They are too coarse in the limbs for cavalry use, and too light for the guns." In any event, they were the only four horses, alive or dead, in the whole city, and the Venetians love them as though they were their children.

If in its war dress the exterior of St. Mark's presents a strange appearance, the transforma-

tion of the interior is positively startling. Nothing that ingenuity can suggest has been left undone to protect the sculptures, mosaics, glass, and marbles which, brought by the seafaring Venetians from the four corners of the globe, make St. Mark's the most beautiful of churches. Everything portable has been removed to a place of safety, but the famous mosaics, the ancient windows, and the splendid carvings it is impossible to remove, and they are the most precious of all. The two pulpits of colored marbles and the celebrated screen with its carven figures are now hidden beneath pyramids of sand-bags. The spiral columns of translucent alabaster which support the altar, are padded with excelsior and wrapped with canvas. Swinging curtains of quilted burlap protect the walls of the chapels and transepts from flying shell fragments. Yet all these precautions would probably avail but little were a bomb to strike St. Mark's. In the destruction that would almost certainly result there would perish mosaics and sculptures which were in

their present places when Vienna was still a Swabian village, and Berlin had yet to be founded on the plain above the Spree.

If it has proved difficult to protect from airplane fire the massive basilica of St. Mark's, consider the problem presented to the authorities by the Palace of the Doges, that creation of fairylike loveliness, whose exquisite façades, with their delicate window tracery and fragile carvings, would be irretrievably ruined by a well-aimed bomb. In order to avert such a disaster, it was proposed to protect the façades of the palace by enclosing the building in temporary walls of masonry. It was found, however, that this plan was not feasible, as the engineers reported that the piles on which the ancient building is poised would submerge if subjected to such an additional weight. All that they have been able to do, therefore, is to shore up the arches of the loggia with beams, fill up the windows with brick and plaster, and pray to the patron saint of Venice to save the city's most exquisite structure.

The gilded figure of an angel, which for so many centuries has looked down on Venice from the summit of the Campanile, has been given a dress of battleship gray that it may not serve as a landmark for the Austrian aviators. Over the celebrated equestrian statue of Colleoni—of which Ruskin said: "I do not believe there is a more glorious work of sculpture existing in the world"—has been erected a titanic armored sentry-box, which is covered, in turn, with layer upon layer of sand-bags. Could the spirit of that great soldier of fortune be consulted, however, I rather fancy that he would insist upon sitting his bronze warhorse, unprotected and unafraid, facing the bombs of the Austrian airmen just as he used to face the bolts of the Austrian crossbowmen.

The commercial life of Venice is virtually at a standstill. Most of the glass and lace manufactories have been forced to shut down. The dealers in curios and antiques lounge idly in their doorways, deeming themselves fortunate if they make a sale a month. All save one or

two of the great hotels which have not been taken over by the Government for hospitals have had to close their doors. The hordes of guides and boatmen and waiters who depended for their living upon the tourists are—such of them as have not been called to the colors—without work and in desperate need. In normal times a quarter of Venice's 150,000 inhabitants are paupers, and this percentage must have enormously increased, for, notwithstanding the relief measures which the Government has taken, unemployment is general, the prices of food are constantly increasing, and coal has become almost impossible to obtain. Fishing, which was one of the city's chief industries, is now an exceedingly hazardous employment because of submarines and floating mines. Save for the clumsy craft of commerce, the gondolas have largely disappeared, and with them has disappeared, only temporarily, let us hope, the most picturesque feature of Venetian life. They have been driven off by the slim, polished, cigar-shaped power-boats, which tear madly up

and down and crossways of the canals in the service of the military government and of the fleet. To use a gondola, particularly at night, is as dangerous as it would be to drive upon a motor race-course with a horse and buggy, for, as no lights are permitted, one is in constant peril of being run down by the recklessly driven power craft, whose wash, by the way, is seriously affecting the foundations of many of the palazzos.

It is an unfamiliar, gloomy, mysterious place, is war-time Venice, but in certain respects I liked it better than the commercialized city of antebellum days. Gone are the droves of loud-voiced tourists, gone the impudent boatmen, the importunate beggars, the impertinent guides, gone the glare of lights and the blare of cheap music. No longer do the lantern-strung barges of the musicians gather nightly off the Molo. No longer across the waters float the strains of *"Addio di Napoli"* and *"Ciri-Biri-Bi"*; the Canale Grande is dark and silent now. The tourist hostelries, on whose terraces

at night gleamed the white shirt-fronts of men and the white shoulders of women, now have as their only guests the white-bandaged wounded. In its darkness, its mystery, its silence, it is once again the Venice of the Middle Ages, the Venice of lovers and conspirators, of inquisitors and assassins, the Venice of which Shakespeare sang.

But with the coming of dawn the Venice of the twelfth century is abruptly transformed into the Venice of the twentieth. The sun, rising out of the Adriatic, turns into ellipsoids of silver the aluminum-colored observation balloons which form the city's first line of aerial defense. As the sun climbs higher it brings into bold relief the lean barrels of the anti-aircraft guns, which, from the roofs of the buildings to the seaward, sweep the eastern sky. Abreast the Public Gardens the great war-ships, in their coats of elephant-gray, swing lazily at their moorings. Near the Punta della Motta lie the destroyers, like greyhounds held in leash. Off the Riva Schiavoni, on the very

spot, no doubt, where Dandolo's war-galleys lay, are anchored the British submarines. And atop his granite column, a link with the city's glorious and warlike past, still stands the winged lion of St. Mark, snarling a perpetual challenge at his ancient enemy—Austria.

The Comando Supremo, or Great Headquarters, of the Italian army is at Udine, an ancient Venetian town some twenty miles from the Austrian frontier. This is supposed to be a great secret, and must not be mentioned in letters or newspaper despatches, it being assumed that, were the Austrians to learn of the presence in Udine of the Comando Supremo, their airmen would pay inconvenient visits to the town, and from the clouds would drop their steel calling-cards on the King and General Cadorna. So, though every one in Italy is perfectly aware that the head of the Government and the head of the army are at Udine, the fact is never mentioned in print. To believe that the Austrians are ignorant of the whereabouts

of the Italian high command is to severely strain one's credulity. The Italians not only know where the Austrian headquarters is situated, but they know in which houses the various generals live, and the restaurants in which they eat. This extreme reticence of the Italians seems a little irksome and overdone after the frankness one encounters on the French and British fronts, but it is due, no doubt, to the admonitions which are posted in hotels, restaurants, stations, and railway carriages throughout Italy: "It is the patriotic duty of good citizens not to question the military about the war," and : "The military are warned not to discuss the war with civilians. An indiscreet friend can be as dangerous as an enemy."

My previous acquaintance with Udine had been confined to fleeting glimpses of it from the windows of the Vienna-Cannes express. Before the war it was, like the other towns which dot the Venetian plain, a quaint, sleepy, easy-going place, dwelling in the memories of its past, but with the declaration of hostilities it

suddenly became one of the busiest and most important places in all Italy. From his desk in the Prefecture, General Cadorna, a short, wiry, quick-moving man in the middle sixties, with a face as hard and brown as a hickory-nut, directs the operations of the armies along that four-hundred-and-fifty-mile-long battle-line which stretches from the Stelvio to the sea. The cobble-paved streets and the vaulted arcades are gay with many uniforms, for, in addition to the hundreds of staff and divisional officers quartered in Udine, the French, British, Russian, and Belgian Governments maintain there military missions, whose business it is to keep the staffs of their respective armies constantly in touch with the Italian high command, thus securing practical co-operation. In a modest villa, a short distance outside the town, dwells the King, who has been on the front almost constantly since the war began. Although, as ruler of the kingdom, he is commander-in-chief of the Italian armies, he rarely gives advice unless it is asked for,

The King of Italy and General Cadorna at Castelnuovo.

Scarcely a day passes that the King does not visit some sector of the battle-line, but he rarely gives advice unless it is asked for, and never interferes with the decisions of the Comando Supremo.

The Peril in the Clouds.

The gunners of an Italian anti-aircraft battery sight an Austrian airplane.

and never interferes with the decisions of the Comando Supremo. Scarcely a day passes that he does not visit some sector of the battle-line. Officers and men in some of the lonely mountain commands told me that the only general who has visited them is the King. Should he venture into exposed positions, as he frequently does, he is halted by the local command. It is, of course, tactfully done. "I am responsible for your Majesty's safety," says the officer. "Were there to be an accident I should be blamed." Whereupon the King promptly withdraws. If he is not permitted to take unnecessary risks himself, neither will he permit others. When the Prince of Wales visited the Italian front last summer, he asked permission to enter a certain first-line trench, which was being heavily shelled. The King bluntly refused. "I want no historic incidents here," he remarked dryly.

To obtain a room in Udine is as difficult as it is to obtain hotel accommodation in New York during the Automobile Show. But, be-

cause I was a guest of the Government, I found that a room had been reserved for me by the Comando Supremo at the Hotel Croce di Malta. I was told that since the war three proprietors of this hotel had made their fortunes and retired, and after I received my bill I believed it. There was in my room one of those inhospitable, box-shaped porcelain stoves so common in North Italy and the Tyrol. To keep a modest wood-fire going in that stove cost me exactly thirty lire (about six dollars) a day. But a fire was a necessity. Luxuries came higher. Yet the scene in the hotel's shabby restaurant at the dinner-hour was well worth the fantastic charges, for there gathered there nightly as interesting a company as I have not often seen under one roof: a poet and novelist who has given to Italy the most important literary work since the days of the great classics, and who, by his fiery and impassioned speeches, did more than any single person to force the nation's entrance into the war; an American dental surgeon who abandoned an enormously

lucrative practice in Rome to establish at the front a hospital where he has performed feats approaching the magical in rebuilding shrapnel-shattered faces; a Florentine connoisseur, probably the greatest living authority on Italian art, who has been commissioned with the preservation of all the works of art in the war zone; an English countess who is in charge of an X-ray car which operates within range of the Austrian guns; a young Roman noble whom I had last seen, in pink, in the hunting-field, a group of khaki-clad officers from the British mission, cold and aloof of manner despite their being among allies; a party of Russians, their hair clipped to the skull, their green tunics sprinkled with stars and crosses; half a dozen French military attachés in beautifully cut uniforms of horizon-blue; and Italian officers, animated and gesticulative, on whose breasts were medal ribbons showing that they had fought in forgotten wars in forgotten corners of Africa. At one table they were discussing the probable date of some Roman

remains which had just been unearthed at Aquileia; at another an argument was in progress over the merits of *vers libre;* one of the Russians was explaining a new system he had evolved for breaking the bank at Monte Carlo; the young English countess was retailing the latest jokes from the London music-halls, but nowhere did I hear mentioned the grim and bloody business which had brought us, of so many minds and from so many lands, to this shabby, smoke-filled, garlic-scented room in this little frontier town. Yet, had the door been opened, and had we stilled our voices, we could have heard, quite plainly, the sullen grumble of the cannon.

II

WHY ITALY WENT TO WAR

TO understand why Italy is at war you have only to look at the map of Central Europe. You can hardly fail to be struck by the curious resemblance which the outline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire bears to a monstrous bird of prey hovering threateningly over Italy. The body of the bird is formed by Hungary; Bohemia is the right wing, Bosnia and Dalmatia constitute the left; the Tyrol represents the head, while the savage beak, with its open jaws, is formed by that portion of the Tyrol commonly known as the Trentino. And that savage beak, you will note, is buried deep in the shoulder of Italy, holding between its jaws, as it were, the Lake of Garda. To continue the simile, it will be seen that the talons of the bird, formed by the Istrian Peninsula, reach out over the Adriatic in threatening proximity

to Venice and the other Italian coast towns. It is to end the intolerable menace of that beak and those claws that Italy is fighting. There you have it in a nutshell.

Just as in France, since 1870, the national watchword has been "Alsace-Lorraine," so in

Italy, for upward of half a century, the popular cry has been *"Italia Irredenta"*—Italy Unredeemed. It was a deep and bitter disappointment to all Italians that, upon the formation in 1866 of the present kingdom, there should have been left under Austrian dominion two regions which, in population, in language, and

in sentiment, were essentially Italian. These "unredeemed" regions were generally called after their respective capital cities: Trent and Trieste. But, though the phrase *Italia Irredenta* was originally interpreted as referring only to the Trentino and Trieste, it has gradually assumed, in the course of years, a broader significance, until now it includes all that portion of the Tyrol lying south of the Brenner, the Carso plateau, Trieste and its immediate hinterland, the entire Istrian Peninsula, the Hungarian port of Fiume, and the whole of Dalmatia and Albania. In other words, the Irredentists of to-day—and, since Italy entered the war, virtually the entire nation has subscribed to Irredentist aims and ideals—dream of an Italy whose northern frontier shall be formed by the main chain of the Alps, and whose rule shall be extended over the entire eastern shore of the Adriatic.

In order to intelligently understand the Italian view-point, suppose that we imagine ourselves in an analogous position. For this pur-

pose you must picture Canada as a highly organized military Power, its policies directed by an aggressive, predacious and unscrupulous government, and with a population larger than that of the United States. You will conceive of the State of Vermont as a Canadian province under military control: a wedge driven into the heart of manufacturing New England, and threatening the teeming valleys of the Connecticut and the Hudson. You must imagine this province of Vermont as overrun by Canadian soldiery; as crisscrossed by military roads and strategic railways; its hills and mountains abristle with forts whose guns are turned United Statesward. The inhabitants of the province, though American in descent, in traditions, and in ideals, are oppressed by a harsh and tyrannical military rule. With the exception of a single trunk-line, there are no railways crossing the frontier. Commercial intercourse with the United States is virtually forbidden. To teach American history in the schools of Vermont is prohibited; to display the

American flag is a felony; to sing the "Star-Spangled Banner" is punishable by imprisonment or a fine. For the Vermonters to communicate, no matter how innocently, with their kinsmen in the United States, is to bring down upon them suspicion and possible punishment. By substituting Austria-Hungary for Canada, Italy for the United States, and the Trentino for Vermont, you will, perhaps, have a little clearer understanding of why the liberation of the Trentino from Austrian oppression is demanded by all Italians.

A similar homely parallel will serve to explain the Adriatic situation. You will imagine Seattle and the shores of Puget Sound, with its maze of islands, in Canadian possession. Seattle, Vancouver, and Victoria are strongly fortified bases for Canadian battle-fleets and flotillas of destroyers which constantly menace the commercial cities along our Pacific seaboard. The Americans dwelling in Seattle and the towns of the Olympic Peninsula are under an even harsher rule than their brethren in

Vermont. No American may hold a Government position. The Canadian authorities encourage and assist the immigration of thousands of Orientals in order to get the trade of the region out of American hands. A Canadian naval base at Honolulu threatens our trade routes in the Pacific and our commercial interests in Mexico and the Orient. In this analogy Seattle stands, of course, for Trieste; the Olympic Peninsula corresponds to the Istrian Peninsula; for Vancouver and Victoria you will read Pola and Fiume; while Honolulu might, by a slight exercise of the imagination, be translated into the great Austrian stronghold of Cattaro. Such is a reasonably accurate parallel to Italy's Adriatic problem.

For purposes of administration the Trentino, which the Austrians call Süd-Tirol, forms one province with Tyrol. For such a union there is no geographic, ethnologic, historic, or economic excuse. Of the 347,000 inhabitants of the Trentino, 338,000 are Italian. The half million inhabitants of Tyrol are, on the other

hand, all Germans. The two regions are separated by a tremendous mountain wall, whose only gateway is the Brenner. On one side of that wall is Italy, with her vines, her mulberry-trees, her whitewashed, red-tiled cottages, her light-hearted, easy-going, Latin-blooded peasantry; across the mountains is the solemn, austere German scenery, with savage peaks and gloomy pine forests, a region inhabited by a stolid, slow-thinking Teutonic people. The Trentino and the Tyrol have about as much in common as Cuba and Maine.

The possession of the Trentino by Austria is not alone a geographical and ethnological anomaly: it is a pistol held at the head of Italy. Glance once more at the map, if you please, and you will see what I mean. The Trentino is, you will note, nothing but a prolongation of the valleys of Lombardy and Venetia. Held by Austria, it is like a great intrenched camp in the heart of northern Italy, menacing the valley of the Po, which is one of the kingdom's most vital arteries, and the link between her

richest and most productive cities. From the Trentino, with its ring of forts, Austria can always threaten and invade her neighbor. She lies in the mountains, with the plains beneath her. She can always sweep down into the plains, but the Italians cannot seriously invade the mountains, since, even were they able to force the strongly defended passes, they would only find a maze of other mountains beyond. When, in the summer of 1916, the Archduke Frederick launched his great offensive from the Trentino, supported by a shattering artillery, he came perilously near—much nearer, indeed, than the world was permitted to know—to cutting the main east-and-west line of communications, which would have resulted in isolating the Italian armies operating on the Isonzo.

The Trentino is dominated by the army. Its administration is as essentially military in character as that of Gibraltar. It is, to all intents and purposes, one vast camp, commanded by thirty-five forts, gridironed with inaccessible military highways, and overrun with soldiery.

Economic expansion has been systematically discouraged. The waterfalls of the Trentino could, it is estimated, develop 250,000 horse-power, but the province has not benefited by this energy, for the regions to the north are already supplied, and the military authorities have not permitted its transmission to the manufacturing towns of Lombardy and Venetia, where it is needed. Neither roads nor railways have been built save for strategic purposes, and, as a result, the peasants have virtually no outlets for their produce. In fact, it has been the consistent policy of the Austrian Government to completely isolate the Trentino from Italy. In pursuance of this policy, all telephone and telegraph communications and many sorely needed railway connections with the other side of the frontier have been prohibited. Though the renting of their mountain pastures had always been the peasants' chief source of income, the military authorities issued orders, long before this war began, that Italian herdsmen could no longer drive their cattle across

the border to graze, the prohibition being based on the ground that the herdsmen were really Italian army officers in disguise. In recent years the fear of Italian spies has become with the Austrian military authorities almost an insane obsession. Innocent tourists, engineers, and commercial travellers were arrested by the score on the charge of espionage. The mere fact of being an Italian was in itself ground for suspicion. Compared with the attitude of the Austrian Government toward its Italian subjects in the Trentino, the treatment accorded by the Boers to the British residents of the Transvaal was considerate and kind. Thus there arose in the Trentino, as in all Austrian provinces inhabited by Italians, a strange, unhealthy atmosphere of suspicion, of secrecy, and of fear. This atmosphere became so pronounced in recent years that it was sensed even by passing tourists, who felt as though they were in a besieged city, surrounded by secret agents and spies.

But, oppressive and tyrannical as are Aus-

tria's methods in the Trentino, the final expression of her anti-Italian policy is to be found in the Adriatic provinces. Here lie Austria's chief interests—the sea and commerce. Here, therefore, is to be found an even deeper fear of Italianism, and here still sterner methods are employed to stamp it out. The government of Trieste is, in fact, organized for that very purpose—witness the persecutions to which the citizens of Italian descent are subjected by the police, the countless political imprisonments, the systematic hostility to Italian schools in contrast to the Government's generosity toward German and Slovene institutions, and the State assistance given to Czech, Croatian, and Slovene banks for the purpose of taking the trade of the city out of Italian hands. Italians are excluded from all municipal employments, from the postal service, the railways, and the State industries. Nor does the official persecution end there. The presentation of many of the old Italian operas is forbidden. The singing of Garibaldi's Hymn leads to jail.

Every year thousands of Italian papers are confiscated. Until the war began hundreds of Italians were expelled annually by the police, to be replaced (according to the official instructions of 1912) "by more loyal and more useful elements."

Though for more than five centuries Trieste has belonged to the House of Hapsburg, the city is as Italian as though it had always been ruled from Rome. There is nothing in Trieste, save only the uniforms of the military and the *K.K.* on the doors of the Government offices, to remind one of Austrian rule. The language, the customs, the architecture, the names over the shop-doors, the faces of the people—everything is characteristically Italian. Outside of Trieste the zones of nationality are clearly divided: to the west, on the coast, dwell the Italians; in the mountainous interior to the eastward are the Slavs. But in Istria, that arrowhead-shaped peninsula at the head of the Adriatic, the population is almost solidly Italian. Though alternately bribed and bullied,

cajoled and coerced, there persists, both among the simple peasants of the Trentino and Istria and the hard-headed business men of Trieste, a most sentimental and inextinguishable attachment for the Italian motherland. There is, indeed, something approaching the sublime in the fascination which Italy exercises across the centuries on these exiled sons of hers.

The arguments adduced by Italy for the acquisition of Dalmatia are by no means as sound ethnographically as her claims to the Trentino and Trieste. Though the apostles of expansion assert that ten per cent of the population of Dalmatia is Italian, this is an exaggeration, the most reliable authorities agreeing that the Italian element does not exceed three or four per cent. But this is not saying that Dalmatia is not, in spirit, in language, in traditions, Italian. Cruise along its shores, talk to its people, view the architecture of Ragusa, of Zara, of Spalato, and you will not need to be reminded that Dalmatia was Venetian until, little more than a century ago, Napoleon handed it over to Aus-

tria at the peace of Campo Formio in return for the recognition of his two made-to-order states, the Cis-Alpine and Ligurian Republics.

It is safe to say that the war will produce no more delicate problem than that of Dalmatia, which, as I have already shown, can never be settled on purely racial lines. Those who have studied the subject agree that to completely shut off Austria-Hungary from the sea would be a proceeding of grave unwisdom and one which would be certain to sow the seed for future wars. This is, I believe, the view taken by most deep-thinking Italians. The Italianization of the Adriatic's eastern seaboard would result, moreover, in raising a barrier against the legitimate expansion of the Balkan Slavs and would end the Serbian dream of an outlet to the sea. But the statesmen who are shaping Italy's policies are, I am convinced, too sensible and too far-seeing to commit so grave a blunder. Were I to hazard a prophecy—and prophesying is always a poor business—I should say that, no matter how con-

clusive a victory the Allies may achieve, neither Austria-Hungary nor Serbia will be wholly cut off from the salt water.

Events in the less remote theatres of war have prevented the Italian occupation of Albania from attracting the attention it deserves. The operations in that region have, moreover, been shrouded in mystery; foreigners desiring to visit Albania have met with polite but firm refusals; the published reports of the progress of the Albanian expedition—which, by the way, is a much larger force than is generally supposed—have been meagre and unsatisfying. The Italians figure, I fancy, on making their occupation as extensive and as solid as possible before the Albanian question comes up for international discussion.

If Italy's ambitions in Dalmatia bring her into collision with the Slavs, her plans for expansion in Albania are bound to arouse the hostility of the Greeks. The Italian troops at Argyocastro are occupying territory which Greece looks on as distinctly within her sphere

of influence, and they menace Janina itself. Though Italy has intimated, I believe, that her occupation of Albania is not to be regarded as permanent, she is most certainly on the eastern shore of the Adriatic to stay, for her commercial and political interests will not permit her to have a Haiti or a Mexico at her front door. So I rather fancy that, when the peacemakers deal out the cards upon the green-topped table, Albania will become Italian in name, if not in fact, under a control similar to that which the French exercise in Morocco or the British in Egypt. And it will be quite natural, for there is in the Albanians a strong streak of Italian.

The settlement of this trans-Adriatic problem is going to require the most cautious and delicate handling. How far will Italy be permitted to go? How far may Serbia come? Shall Austria be cut off from the sea? Is Hungary to become an independent kingdom? Is Montenegro to disappear? What is Greece to get? The only one of these questions that can be answered with any certainty is the last.

Greece, as the result of her shifty and even treacherous attitude, will get very little consideration. On the decision of these questions hangs the future of the Balkan peoples. Though their final settlement must, of course, be deferred until the coming of peace, some regard will have to be paid, after all, to actual occupancies and accomplished facts. That is why Italy is making her position in Albania so solid that she cannot readily be ousted. And perhaps it is well that she is. Europe will owe a debt of gratitude to the Italians if they can bring law and order to Albania, which has never had a speaking acquaintance with either of them.

Nor do Italian ambitions end with the domination of the eastern shore of the Adriatic. With the destruction, or at least the disablement, of the Austrian Empire, Italy dreams of bringing within her political and commercial sphere of influence a considerable portion of the Balkan Peninsula, from which she is separated by only forty-seven miles of salt water.

But that is only the beginning of her vision of commercial greatness. Look at the map and you will see that with its continuation, the island of Sicily, Italy forms a great wharf which reaches out into the Mediterranean, nearly to the shores of Africa. Her peculiarly fortunate geographical position enables her, therefore, to offer the shortest route from Western and Central Europe to North Africa, the Levant, and the Farther East. It has been rumored, though with what truth I cannot say, that the Allies have agreed, in the event that they are completely victorious, to a rectification of the Tunisian and Egyptian frontiers, thus materially improving Italy's position in Libya, as the colony of Tripolitania is now known. It is also generally understood that, should the dismemberment of Asiatic Turkey be decided upon, the city of Smyrna, with its splendid harbor and profitable commerce, as well as a slice of the hinterland, will fall to Italy's portion. With her flag thus firmly planted on the coasts of three continents, with her most dan-

gerous rival finally disposed of, with the splendid industrial organization, born of the war, speeded up to its highest efficiency, and with vast new markets in Africa, in Asia, in the Balkans opened to her products, Italy dreams of wresting from France and England the overlordship of the Middle Sea.

It would be useless to deny that an unfavorable impression was created in the United States by the fact that Italy, in entering the war, turned against her former allies. Her enemies have charged that she dickered with both the Entente and the Central Powers, and only joined the former because they made her the most tempting offer. That she did dicker with Austria is but the unvarnished truth—and of that chapter of Italian history the less said the better—but I am convinced that she finally entered the war, not because she had been bribed by promises of territorial concessions, but because the national conscience demanded that she join the forces of civilization in their struggle against barbarism. Suppose that I

sketch for you, in brief, bold outline, the chain of historic events which occurred during the ten months between the presentation to Serbia of the Austrian ultimatum and Italy's declaration of war on Austria. Then you will be able to form your own opinion.

On the evening of July 23, 1914, Austria handed her note to Serbia. It demanded in overbearing and insulting terms that Serbia should place under Austrian control her schools, her law-courts, her police, in fact her whole internal administration. The little kingdom was given forty-eight hours in which to consider her answer. In other words, she was called upon, within the space of two days, to sacrifice her national independence. At six o'clock on the evening of July 25 the time limit allowed by the Austrian ultimatum expired. Half an hour later the Austrian Minister and his staff left Belgrade.

Now Article VII of the Treaty of Alliance between Italy, Austria, and Germany provided that in the event of any change in the *status*

quo of the Balkan Peninsula which would entail a temporary or permanent occupation, Austria and Italy bound themselves to work in mutual accord on the basis of reciprocal compensation for any advantage, territorial or otherwise, obtained by either of the contracting Powers. Here is the text of the Article. Read it for yourself:

Austria-Hungary and Italy, who aim exclusively at the maintenance of the *status quo* in the East, bind themselves to employ their influence to prevent every territorial change which may be detrimental to one or other of the contracting Powers. They will give each other all explanations necessary for the elucidation of their respective intentions as well as those of the other Powers. If, however, in the course of events the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans and on the Ottoman coasts and in the islands of the Adriatic and the Ægean Seas should become impossible, and if, either in consequence of the acts of a third Power or of other causes, Austria and Italy should be compelled to change the *status quo* by a temporary or permanent occupation, such occupation shall only take place after previous agreement between the two Powers, based on the principle of a reciprocal arrangement for all the advantages, territorial or other, which one of them may secure outside the *status quo,* and in such a manner as to satisfy all the legitimate claims of both parties.

Nothing could be plainer than that Austria-Hungary, by forcing war upon Serbia, planned to change the *status quo* in the Near East. Yet she had not taken the trouble to give Italy any explanation of her intentions, nor had she said anything about giving her ally reciprocal compensation as provided for in the treaty. Three days after the memorable 23d of July, therefore, Italy intimated to the Vienna Government that her idea of adequate compensation would be the cession of those Austrian provinces inhabited by Italians. In other words, she insisted that, if Austria was to extend her borders below the Danube by an occupation of Serbia, as was obviously her intention, thus upsetting the balance of power in the Balkans, Italy expected to receive as compensation the Trentino and Trieste, which, though under Austrian rule, are Italian in sentiment and population. Otherwise, she added, the Triple Alliance would be broken. On the 3d of August, having received no satisfactory reply from Austria, Italy declared her neutrality.

In so doing, however, she made it quite clear that she in no way admitted Austria's right to a free hand in the Adriatic or the Balkan Peninsula—regions which Italy has long regarded as within her own sphere of influence.

Early in the winter of 1914 Prince von Bülow, one of the most suave and experienced German diplomats, arrived in Rome on a special mission from Berlin. In his first interview with the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Sonnino, he frankly acknowledged Italy's right to territorial compensation under the terms of Article VII of the Triple Alliance. There is no doubt that Germany, recognizing the danger of flouting Italy, brought strong pressure to bear on Austria to surrender at least a portion of the regions in question. Austria, however, bluntly refused to heed either Italy's demands or Germany's suggestions. She refused even to discuss the question of ceding any part of her Italian provinces. She attempted, indeed, to reverse the situation by claiming compensation from Italy for the occu-

pation of the Dodecannesus and Vallona. The Dodecannesus was held as a pledge of Turkish good faith, while the occupation of Vallona was indispensable for the protection of Italian interests in Albania, where anarchy reigned, and where much the same conditions prevailed which existed in Mexico at the time of the American occupation of Vera Cruz.

The discussions might well have dragged on indefinitely, but late in March, 1915, Austria, goaded by her ally into a more conciliatory attitude, reluctantly consented to make concrete proposals. She offered to Italy the southern half of the Trentino, but mentioned no definite boundaries, and added that the bargain could not be carried into effect until peace had been concluded. In return she claimed from Italy heavy financial contributions to the National Debt and to the provincial and communal loans, also full indemnity for all investments made in the ceded territory, for all ecclesiastical property and entailed estates, and for the pensions of State officials. To assign even an ap-

proximate value to such concessions would entail a prolonged delay—a fact of which Austria was perfectly aware.

Italy responded to the Austrian advances by presenting her counter-claims, and for more than a month the negotiations pursued a difficult and tedious course. It must be admitted that, everything considered, Italy's claims were not particularly exorbitant. She claimed (1) a more extended and more easily defendable frontier in the Trentino, but she refrained from demanding the cession of the entire region lying south of the Brenner, as she would have been justified in doing from a strategic point of view; (2) a new boundary on the Isonzo which would give her possession of the towns of Gradisca and Gorizia (she has since taken them by arms); (3) the cession of certain islands of the Curzolari group; (4) the withdrawal of Austrian pretensions in Albania and the acknowledgement of Italy's right to occupy the Dodecannesus and Vallona; (5) the formation of the city of Trieste, together with the adjacent

judicial districts of Priano and Capo d'Istria, into an autonomous State, independent of both Italy and Austria. By such an arrangement Austria would have retained nearly the whole of the Istrian Peninsula, the cities of Pola and Fiume, the entire Dalmatian coast, and the majority of the Dalmatian Islands. But she refused to even consider Italy's proposed changes in the Adriatic, or to do more than slightly increase her offer in the Trentino. Italy therefore broke off negotiations, and on May 4, 1915, the alliance with Austria was denounced.

Prince von Bülow was now confronted with the complete failure of his mission of keeping Italy yoked to Austria and Germany. No one realized better than this suave and astute diplomatist that the bonds which still held together the three nations were about to break. He next endeavored, by methods verging on the unscrupulous, to create distrust of the Italian Government among the Italian people. A member of the Reichstag circulated stealthily

among the deputies and journalists, flattering each in turn with the assumption that he alone was the man of the moment, and offering him, in the names of Germany and Austria, new concessions which had not been communicated to the Italian Cabinet. It was back-stairs diplomacy in its shadiest and most questionable form. The concessions thus unofficially promised consisted of the offer of a new frontier in the Trentino, and for Trieste an administrative but not a political autonomy. The Adriatic, it seems, was to remain as before. And these concessions were all hedged about by impossible restrictions, or were not to come into effect until after the war. Yet at one time these intrigues came perilously near to accomplishing their purpose. Matters were still further complicated by the activities and interference of a former Foreign Minister, Signor Giolitti, whose vanity had been flattered, and whose ambitions had been cleverly played upon by the Teutonic emissary. To fully understand the extraordinary nature of this proceeding,

one must picture Count von Bernstorff, at the height of the submarine crisis, negotiating not with the Government of the United States, but with Mr. William Jennings Bryan!

But, fortunately for the national honor, the Italian people, having had time to reflect what the future of Italy would be after the war, whatever its outcome, were they to be cut off from the only peoples in Europe with which they had spiritual sympathy, took things into their own hands. The storm of anger and indignation which swept the country rocked the Government to its foundations. The Salandra cabinet, which had resigned as a protest against the machinations of Giolitti, was returned to power. Through every city, town, and hamlet from Savoy to Sicily, thronged workmen, students, business and professional men, even priests and monks, waving the red-white-and-green banner and shouting the national watchwords "Italia Irredenta," and "Avanti Savoia!"

But there was a deeper cause underlying

these great patriotic demonstrations than mere hatred of Austria. They were expressions of national resentment at the impotent and dependent rôle which Italy had played so long. D'Annunzio, in one of his famous addresses in May, 1915, put this feeling into words: "We will no longer be a museum of antiquities, a kind of hostelry, a pleasure resort, under a sky painted over with Prussian blue, for the benefit of international honeymooners."

The sentiment of the people was expressed by the *Idea Nazionale,* which on May 10 declared:

> Italy desires war: (1) In order to obtain Trent, Trieste, and Dalmatia. The country desires it. A nation which has the opportunity to free its land should do so as a matter of imperative necessity. . . . (2) . . . in order to conquer for ourselves a good strategic frontier in the North and East. . . . (3) . . . because to-day, in the Adriatic, in the Balkan Peninsula, the Mediterranean, and Asia, Italy should have all the advantages it is possible for her to have, and without which her political, economic, and moral power would diminish in proportion as that of others increased. . . . If we would be a great Power we must accept certain obligations: one of them is war. . . .

The voice of the people was unmistakable: they wanted war. To have refused that demand would have meant the fall of the Government if not of the dynasty. The King did not want war. The responsible politicians, with a very few exceptions, did not want it. The nobility did not want it. The Church did not want it. The bankers and business men of the nation did not want it. It was the great mass of the Italian people, shamed and indignant at the position in which the nation had been placed by the sordid dickering with Austria, who swept the country into war. I was in Italy during those exciting days; I witnessed the impressive popular demonstrations in the larger cities; and in my mind there was left no shadow of a doubt that the Government had to choose between war and revolution. On the 23d of May, 1915, Italy declared war on Austria.

For ten months Italy, in the face of sneers and jeers, threats and reproaches, had maintained her neutrality. Be it remembered, how-

ever, that it was from the first a neutrality benevolent to the Allies. Even those who consider themselves well informed have apparently failed to recognize how decisive a factor that neutrality was. Italy's action in promptly withdrawing her forces from the French border relieved France's fears of an Italian invasion, and left her free to use the half million troops which had been guarding her southern frontier to oppose the German advance on Paris. It is not overstating the facts to assert that, had Italy's attitude toward France been less frank and honest, had the Republic not felt safe in stripping its southern border of troops, von Kluck would have broken through to Paris—he came perilously near to doing so as it was—and the whole course of the war would have been changed. It is to be hoped that, when the diplomatic history of the war comes to be written, the attitude of Italy during those critical days will receive the recognition which it deserves.

III

FIGHTING ON THE ROOF OF EUROPE

THE sun had scarcely shown itself above the snowy rampart of the Julian Alps when the hoarse throbbing of the big gray staff-car awoke the echoes of the narrow street on which fronts the Hotel Croce di Malta in Udine. Despite a leather coat, a fur-lined cap, and a great fleecy muffler which swathed me to the eyes, I shivered in the damp chill of the winter dawn. We adjusted our goggles and settled down into the heavy rugs, the soldier-driver threw in his clutch, the sergeant sitting beside him let out a vicious snarl from the horn, the little group of curious onlookers scattered hastily, and the powerful car leaped forward like a race-horse that feels the spur. With the horn sounding its hoarse warning, we thundered through the narrow, tortuous, cobble-paved streets, between rows of old, old houses

Alpini Going Into Action.

Their white uniforms make them almost indistinguishable against the blinding expanses of snow.

On the Roof of the World.

It not infrequently happens that the outposts on the higher peaks are cut off by a heavy fall of snow and cannot be relieved until the spring.

with faded frescoes on their plastered walls and with dim, echoing arcades. And so into the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele—there is no more charming little square in Italy—with its fountain and its two stone giants and the pompous statue of an incredibly ugly King astride a prancing horse and a monument to Peace set up by Napoleon to commemorate a treaty which was the cause of many wars. At the back of the piazza, like the back-drop on a stage, rises a towering sugar-loaf mound, thrown up, so they say, by Attila, that from it he might conveniently watch the siege and burning of Aquileia. Perched atop this mound, and looking for all the world like one of Maxfield Parrish's painted castles, is the Castello, once the residence of the Venetian and Austrian governors, and, rising above it, a white and slender tower. If you will take the trouble to climb to the summit of this tower you will find that the earth you left behind is now laid out at your feet like one of those putty maps you used to make in school. Below you, like a vast

tessellated floor, is the Friulian plain, dotted with red-roofed villages, checkerboarded with fields of green and brown, stretching away, away to where, beyond the blue Isonzo, the Julian and Carnic Alps leap skyward in a mighty, curving, mile-high wall. You have the war before you, for amid those distant mountains snakes the Austro-Italian battle-line. Just as Attila and his Hunnish warriors looked down from the summit of this very mound, fourteen hundred years ago, upon the destruction of the Italian plain-towns, so to-day, from the same vantage-point, the Italians can see their artillery methodically pounding to pieces the defenses of the modern Huns. A strange reversal of history, is it not?

Leaving on our right the Palazzo Civico, built two-score years before Columbus set foot on the beach of San Salvador, we rolled through the gateway in the ancient city wall, acknowledging the salute of the steel-helmeted sentry just as the mail-clad knights who rode through that same gateway to the fighting on

the plain, long centuries ago, doubtless acknowledged the salute of the steel-capped men-at-arms. Down the straight white road we sped, between rows of cropped and stunted willows, which line the highway on either side like soldiers with bowed heads. It is a storied and romantic region, this Venetia, whose fertile farm-lands, crisscrossed with watercourses, stretch away, flat and brown as an oaken floor, to the snowy crescent of the Alps. Scenes of past wars it still bears upon its face, in its farmhouses clustered together for common protection, in the stout walls and loopholed watch-towers of its towns, record of its warlike and eventful past. One must be prosaic indeed whose imagination remains unstirred by a journey across this historic plain, which has been invaded by Celts, Istrians, and Romans; Huns, Goths, and Lombards; Franks, Germans, and Austrians in turn. Over there, a dozen miles to the southward, lie the ruins of Aquileia, once one of the great cities of the western world, the chief outpost fortress of the Roman Empire,

visited by King Herod of Judea, and the favorite residence of Augustus and Diocletian. These fertile lowlands were devastated by Alaric and his Visigoths and by Attila and his Huns—the original Huns, I mean. Down this very highroad tramped the legions of Tiberius on their way to give battle to the Illyrians and Pannonians. Here were waged the savage conflicts of the Guelphs, the Ghibellines, and the Scaligers. Here fought the great adventurer, Bartolommeo Colleoni; in the whitewashed village inn of Campo Formio, a far greater adventurer signed a treaty whereby he gave away the whole of this region as he would have given away a gold-piece; half a century later Garibaldi and his ragged redshirts fought to win it back.

For mile after mile we sped through a countryside which bore no suggestion of the bloody business which had brought me. So far as war was concerned, I might as well have been motoring through New England. But, though an atmosphere of tranquillity and security pre-

vailed down here amid the villages and farmsteads of the plain, I knew that up there among those snow-crowned peaks ahead of us, musketry was crackling, cannon were belching, men were dying. But as we approached the front—though still miles and miles behind the fighting-line—the signs of war became increasingly apparent: base camps, remount depots, automobile parks, aviation schools, aerodromes, hospitals, machine-shops, ammunition-dumps, railway sidings chock-a-block with freight-cars and railway platforms piled high with supplies of every description. Moving closer, we came upon endless lines of motor-trucks moving ammunition and supplies to the front and other lines of motor-trucks and ambulances moving injured machinery and injured men to the repair-depots and hospitals at the rear. We passed Sicilian mule-carts, hundreds upon hundreds of them, two-wheeled, painted bright yellow or bright red and covered with gay little paintings such as one sees on ice cream venders' carts and hurdy-gurdies, the harness of the

mules studded with brass and hung with scarlet tassels. Then long strings of donkeys, so heavily laden with wine-skins, with bales of hay, with ammunition-boxes, that all that could be seen of the animals themselves were their swinging tails and wagging ears. We met convoys of Austrian prisoners, guarded by cavalry or territorials, on their way to the rear. They looked tired and dirty and depressed, but most prisoners look that. A man who has spent days or even weeks amid the mud and blood of a trench, with no opportunity to bathe or even to wash his hands and face, with none too much food, with many of his comrades dead or wounded, with a shell-storm shrieking and howling about him, and has then had to surrender, could hardly be expected to appear high-spirited and optimistic. Yet it has long been the custom of the Allied correspondents and observers to base their assertions that the morale of the enemy is weakening and that the quality of his troops is deteriorating on the demeanor of prisoners fresh from the firing-line.

Ambulances passed us, travelling toward the hospitals at the base, and sometimes wounded men, limping along on foot. The heads of some were swathed in blood-stained bandages, some carried their arms in slings, others hobbled by with the aid of sticks, for the Italian army is none too well supplied with ambulances and those who are able to walk must do so in order that the places in the ambulances may be taken by their more seriously wounded fellows. They were dog-tired, dirty, caked with mud and blood, but they grinned at us cheerfully—for were they not beating the Austrians? Indeed, one cannot look at Italian troops without seeing that the spirit of the men is high and that they are confident of victory.

Now the roads became crowded, but never blocked, with troops on the march: infantry of the line, short, sturdily built fellows wearing short capes of greenish gray and trench-helmets of painted steel; Alpini, hardy and active as the goats of their own mountains, their tight-fitting breeches and their green felt hats with

the slanting eagle's feather making them look like the chorus of *Robin Hood;* Bersaglieri, the flower of the Italian army, who have preserved the traditions of their famous corps by still clinging to the flat-brimmed, rakish hat with its huge bunch of drooping feathers; engineers, laden like donkeys with intrenching, bridging, and mining tools; motor-cycle despatch riders, leather-jacketed and mud-bespattered, the light-horsemen of modern war; and, very occasionally, for their hour for action has not yet come, detachments of cavalry, usually armed with lances, their helmets and busbies linen-covered to match the businesslike simplicity of their uniform. About the Italian army there is not much of the pomp and circumstance of war. It is as businesslike as a blued-steel revolver. In its total absence of swagger and display it is characteristic of a nation whose instincts are essentially democratic. Everything considered, the Italian troops compare very favorably with any in Europe. The men are for the most part shortish, very thick-set,

and burned by the sun to the color of a much-used saddle. I rather expected to see bearded, unkempt fellows, but I found them clean-shaven and extraordinarily neat. The Italian military authorities do not approve of the *poilu*. Though the men are laden like pack-mules, they cover the ground at a surprisingly smart pace, while special corps, such as the Bersaglieri and the Alpini, are famous for the fashion in which they take even the steepest acclivities at the double. I was told that, though the troops recruited in the North possess the most stamina and endurance, the Neapolitans and Sicilians have the most *élan* and make the best fighters, these sons of the South having again and again advanced to the assault through storms of fire which the colder-blooded Piedmontese refused to face.

It is claimed for the Italian uniform that it is at once the ugliest and the least visible of any worn in Europe. "Its wearer doesn't even make a shadow," a friend of mine remarked. The Italian military authorities were among

the first to make a scientific study of colors for uniforms. They did not select, for example, the "horizon blue" adopted by the French because, while this is less visible on the roads and plains of a flat, open, sunlit region, it would prove fatally distinct on the tree-clad mountain slopes where the Italians are fighting. The color is officially described as gray-green, but the best description of it is that given by a British officer: "Take some mud from the Blue Nile, carefully rub into it two pounds of ship-rat's hair, paint a roan horse with the composition, and then you will understand why the Austrians can't see the Italian soldiers in broad daylight at fifty yards." Its quality of invisibility is, indeed, positively uncanny. While motoring in the war zone I have repeatedly come upon bodies of troops resting beside the road, yet, so marvellously do their uniforms merge into the landscape that, had not my attention been called to them, I should have passed them by unnoticed. The uniform of the Italian officer is of precisely the same

cut and apparently of the same material as that of the men, and as the former not infrequently dispenses with the badges of rank, it is often difficult to distinguish an officer from a private. The Italian officers, particularly those of the cavalry regiments, have always been among the smartest in Europe, but the gorgeous uniforms which, in the happy, carefree days before the war, added such brilliant notes of color to the scenes on the Corso and in the Cascine, have been replaced by a dress which is as simple as it is serviceable.

The Italian Government has a stern objection to wasteful or unnecessary expenditure, and all the costly and superfluous trimmings so dear to the heart of the military have been ruthlessly pruned. But economy is not insisted upon at the expense of efficiency. Nothing is refused or stinted that is necessary to keep the soldiers in good health or that will add to the efficiency of the great fighting-machine. But the war is proving a heavy financial strain for Italy and she is determined not to waste

on it a single soldo more than she can possibly help. On the French and British fronts staff-officers are constantly dashing to and fro in motor-cars on errands of more or less importance. But you see nothing of that sort in the Italian war zone. The Comando Supremo can, of course, have all the motor-cars it wants, but it discourages their use except in cases of necessity. The officers are instructed that, whenever they can travel by railway without detriment to the interests of the service, they are expected to do so, for the trains are in operation to within a few miles of the front and with astonishing regularity, whereas tires and gasolene cost money. Returning at nightfall from the front to Udine, we were nearly always stopped by officers—majors, colonels, and once by a general—who would ask us to give them a lift into town. It has long been the fashion among foreigners to think of Italians, particularly those of the upper class, as late-rising, easy-going, and not particularly in love with work—a sort of *dolce far niente*

people. But the war has shown how unsafe are such generalizations. There is no harder worker on any front than the Italian officer. Even the highest staff-officers are at their desks by eight and frequently by seven. Though it is easier to get from the Italian front to Milan or Florence than it is to get from Verdun to Paris, or from the Somme to London, one sees little of the week-end travelling so common on the British front. Officers in the war zone are entitled to fifteen days' leave of absence a year, and from this rule there are no deviations.

Through the mud we came to the Judrio, which marked the line of the old frontier. We crossed the river by a pontoon bridge, for the Austrians had destroyed the other in their retreat.

"We are in Austria now, I suppose?" I remarked. "In Italia Redenta," my companion corrected me. "This region has always been Italian in everything but name, and now it is Italian in name also." The occupation by the Italian troops, at the very outset of the war,

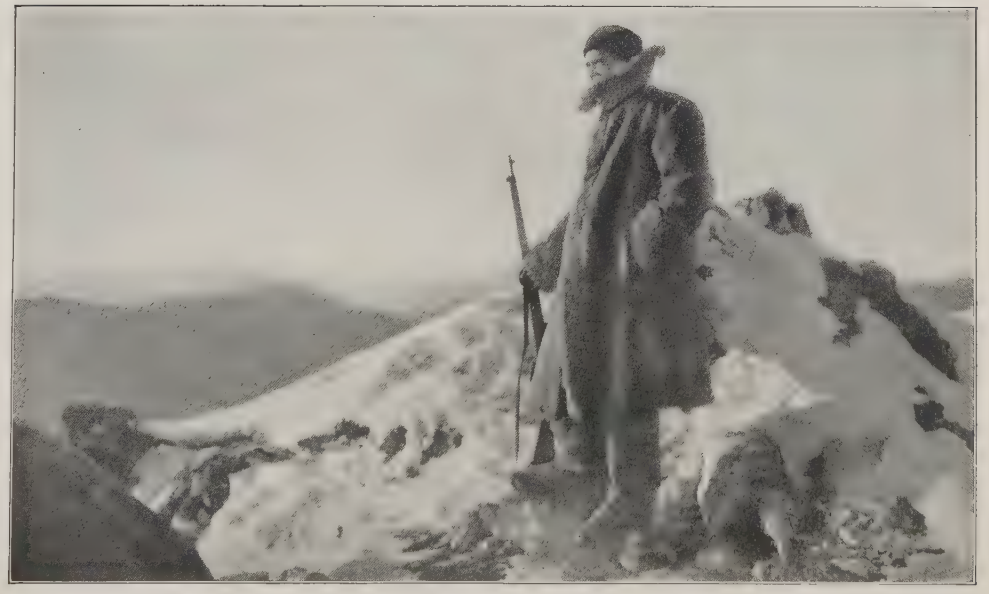
of this wedge of territory between the Judrio and the Isonzo, with Monfalcone, Cervignano, Cormons, Gradisca—old Italian towns all—did much to give the Italian people confidence in the efficiency of their armies and the ability of their generals.

Now the roads were filled with the enormous equipment of an army advancing. Every village swarmed with gray soldiers. We passed interminable processions of motor-lorries, mule-carts, trucks, and wagons piled high with hay,* lumber, wine-casks, flour, shells, barbed wire; boxes of ammunition; pontoon-trains, balloon outfits, searchlights mounted on motor-trucks, wheeled blacksmith shops, wheeled post-offices, field-kitchens; beef and mutton on the hoof; mammoth howitzers and siege guns hauled by panting tractors; creaking, clanking field-batteries, and bright-eyed, brown-skinned, green-caped infantry, battalions, regiments,

* I was told by a British general that thousands of tiny steel prongs had been discovered in baled hay brought from America. They were evidently put there by German sympathizers in the United States with the object of killing the Allies' horses.

A Heavy Howitzer in the High Alps.

Nowadays guns "command" nothing. Instead of frowning down on the enemy from an eminence, they stare blindly skyward from behind a wall of mountains.



An Outpost in the Carnia.

"On no front, not on the sun-scorched plains of Mesopotamia, nor in the Masurian marshes, nor in the blood-soaked mud of Flanders, does the fighting man lead so arduous an existence as up here on the roof of the world."

brigades of them plodding along under slanting lines of steel. All the resources of Italy seemed crowding up to make good the recent gains and to make ready for the next push. One has to see a great army on the march to appreciate how stupendous is the task of supplying with food the hungry men and the hungrier guns, and how it taxes to the utmost all the industrial resources of a nation.

Under all this traffic the roads remained hard and smooth, for gangs of men, with scrapers and steam-rollers were at work everywhere repairing the wear and tear. This work is done by peasants, who are too old for the army, middle-aged, sturdily built fellows who perform their prosaic task with the resignation and inexhaustible patience of the lower-class Italian. They are organized in companies of a hundred men each, called *centurias,* and the company commanders are called (shades of the Roman legions!) *centurions.* Italy owes much to these gray-haired soldiers of the pick and shovel who, working in heat and cold, in snow and rain,

and frequently under Austrian fire, have made it possible for the armies to advance and for food to be sent forward for the men and ammunition for the guns.

When this war is over Italy will find herself with better roads, and more of them, than she ever had before. The hundreds of miles of splendid highways which have been built by the army in the Trentino, in the Carnia, and in Cadore will open up districts of extraordinary beauty which have hitherto been inaccessible to the touring motorist. The Italians have been fortunate in having an inexhaustible supply of road-building material close at hand, for the mountains are solid road metal and in the plains one has only to scratch the soil to find gravel. The work of the road-builders on the Upper Isonzo resembles a vast suburban development, for the smooth white highways which zigzag in long, easy gradients up the mountain slopes are bordered on the inside by stone-paved gutters and on the outside, where the precipice falls sheer away, by cut stone

guard-posts. So extensive and substantial are these improvements that one instinctively looks for a real-estate dealer's sign: "This beautiful lot can be yours for twenty-five dollars down and ten dollars a month for a year." Climbing higher, the roads become steeper and narrower and, because of the heavy rains, very highly crowned, with frequent right-angle and hair-pin turns. Here a skid or a side-slip or the failure of your brakes is quite likely to bring your career to an abrupt and unpleasant termination. To motor along one of these military mountain highways when it is slippery from rain is as nerve-trying as walking on a shingled roof with smooth-soled shoes. At one point on the Upper Isonzo there wasn't enough room between our outer wheels and the edge of the precipice for a starved cat to pass.

Now we were well within the danger zone. I knew it by the screens of woven reeds and grass matting which had been erected along one side of the road in order to protect the

troops and transport using that road from being seen by the Austrian observers and shelled by the Austrian guns. Practically all of the roads on the Italian side of the front are, remember, under direct observation by the Austrians. In fact, they command everything. Everywhere they are above the Italians. From the observatories which they have established on every peak they can see through their powerful telescopes what is transpiring down on the plain as readily as though they were circling above it in an airplane. As a result of the extraordinary advantage which the Austrians enjoy in this respect, it has been found necessary to screen certain of the roads not only on both sides but above, so that in places the traffic passes for miles through literal tunnels of matting. This road masking is a simple form of the art of concealment to which the French have given the name *"camouflage,"* which has been developed to an extraordinary degree on the Western Front. That the Italians have not made a greater use of it is due, no doubt,

to the wholly different conditions under which they are fighting.

Now the crowded road that we were following turned sharply into a narrow valley, down which a small river twisted and turned on its way to the sea. Though the Italian positions ran along the top of the hill slope just above us, and though less than a thousand yards away were the Austrian trenches, that valley, for many miles, was literally crawling with men and horses and guns. Indeed it was difficult to make myself believe that we were within easy range of the enemy and that at any instant a shell might fall upon that teeming hillside and burst with the crash that scatters death.

Despite the champagne-cork popping of the rifles and the basso profundo of the guns, it was a scene of ordered, yes, almost peaceful industry which in no way suggested war but reminded me, rather, of the Panama Canal at the busiest period of its construction (I have used the simile before, but I use it again because I know none better), of the digging of the New

York subway, of the laying of a transcontinental railway, of the building of the dam at Assuan. Trenches which had recently been captured from the Austrians were being cleared and renovated and new trenches were being dug, roads were being repaired, a battery of monster howitzers was being moved into ingeniously concealed positions, a whole system of narrow-gauge railway was being laid down, enormous quantities of stores were being unloaded from wagons and lorries and neatly stacked, soldiers were building great water-tanks on stilts, like those at railway sidings, giant shells were being lowered from trucks and flat-cars by means of cranes; to the accompaniment of saws and hammers a city of wooden huts was springing up on the reverse slope of the hill as though at the wave of a magician's wand.

As I watched with fascinated eyes this scene of activity, as city idlers watch the laborers at work in a cellar excavation, a shell burst on the crowded hillside, perhaps five hundred

yards away. There was a crash like the explosion of a giant cannon-cracker; the ground leaped into flame and dust. A few minutes afterward I saw an ambulance go tearing up the road.

"Just a chance shot," said the staff-officer who accompanied me. "This valley is one of the few places on our front which is invisible to the Austrian observers. That's why we have so many troops in here. The Austrian aviators could spot what is going on here, of course, but our fliers and our anti-aircraft batteries have been making things so hot for them lately that they're not troubling us much. That's the great thing in this game—to keep control of the air. If the Austrian airmen were able to get over this valley and direct the fire of their guns we wouldn't be able to stay here an hour."

My companion had thought that it might be possible to follow the road down the valley to Monfalcone and the sea, and so it would have been had the weather continued misty and

rainy. But the sun came out brightly just as we reached the beginning of an exposed stretch of the road; an Austrian observer, peering through a telescope set up in a monastery on top of a mountain ten miles away, caught sight of the hurrying gray insect which was our car; he rang up on the telephone a certain battery and spoke a few words to the battery commander; and an instant later on the road along which we were travelling Austrian shells began to fall. Shells being expensive, that little episode cost the Emperor-King several hundred kronen, we figured. As for us, it merely interrupted a most interesting morning's ride.

Leaving the car in the shelter of a hill, we toiled up a steep and stony slope to a point from which I was able to get an admirable idea of the general lay of Italy's Eastern Front. Coming toward me was the Isonzo—a bright blue stream the width of the Thames at New London—which, happy at escaping from its gloomy mountain defile, went rioting over the plain in a great westward curve. Turning, I could

catch a glimpse, through a notch in the hills, of the white towers and pink roofs of Monfalcone against the Adriatic's changeless blue. To the east of Monfalcone rose the red heights of the Carso, the barren limestone plateau which stretches from the Isonzo south into Istria. And beyond the Carso I could trace the whole curve of the mountains from in front of Trieste up past Gorizia and away to the Carnia. The Italian front, I might add, divides itself into four sectors: the Isonzo, the Carnia and Cadore, the Trentino, and the Alpine.

Directly below us, not more than a kilometre away, was a village which the Austrians were shelling. Through our glasses we could see the effects of the bombardment as plainly as though we had been watching a football game from the upper tier of seats in the Yale Bowl. They were using a considerable number of guns of various calibers and the crash of the bursting shells was almost incessant. A shell struck a rather pretentious building, which was evidently the town hall; there was a burst of

flame, and a torrent of bricks and beams and tiles shot skyward amid a geyser of green-brown smoke. Another projectile chose as its target the tall white campanile, which suddenly slumped into the street, a heap of brick and plaster. Now and again we caught glimpses of tiny figures—Italian soldiers, most likely—scuttling for shelter. Occasionally the Austrians would vary their rain of heavy projectiles with a sort of shell that went *bang* and released a fleecy cloud of smoke overhead and then dropped a parcel of high explosive that burst on the ground. It was curious to think that the guns from which these shells came were cunningly hidden away in nooks and glens on the other side of that distant range of hills, that the men serving the guns had little if any idea what they were firing at, and that the bombardment was being directed and controlled by an officer seated comfortably at the small end of a telescope up there on a mountain top among the clouds. Yet such is modern war. It used to be one of the artillerist's tenets that his guns

should be placed in a position with a "commanding" range of view. But nowadays guns "command" nothing. Instead they are tucked away in gullies and leafy glens and excavated gun-pits, and their muzzles, instead of frowning down on the enemy from an eminence, stare blindly skyward from behind a wall of hills or mountains. The Italians evidently grew tired of letting the Austrians have their way with the town, for presently some batteries of heavy guns behind us came into action and their shells screamed over our heads. Soon a brisk exchange of compliments between the Italian and Austrian guns was going on over the shattered roofs of the town. We did not remain overlong on our hillside and we were warned by the artillery officer who was guiding us to keep close to the ground and well apart, for, were the Austrians to see us in a group, using maps and field-glasses, they probably would take us for artillery observers and would send over a violent protest cased in steel.

On none of the European battle-fronts is

there a more beautiful and impressive journey than that from Udine up to the Italian positions in the Carnia. The Carnia sector connects the Isonzo and Trentino fronts and forms a vital link in the Italian chain of defense, for, were the Austrians to break through, they would take in flank and rear the great Italian armies operating on the two adjacent fronts. West of the Carnia, in Cadore, the Italians are campaigning in one of the world's most famous playgrounds, for, in the days before the Great War, pleasure-seekers from every corner of Europe and America swarmed by the tens of thousands in the country round about Cortina and in the enchanted valleys of the Dolomites. But now great gray guns are emplaced in the shady glens where the honeymooners used to stroll; on the terraces of the tourist hostelries, where, on summer afternoons, men in white flannels and women in dainty frocks chattered over their tea, now lounge Italian officers in field uniforms of gray; the blare of dance music and the popping of

champagne corks has been replaced by the blare of bugles and the popping of rifles.

If you have ever gone, in a single day, from the sunlit orange groves of Pasadena up to the snow-crowned peaks of the Coast Range, you will have as good an idea as I can give you of the journey from the Isonzo up to the Carnia. Down on the Carso the war is being waged under a sky of molten brass and in summer the winds which sweep that arid plateau are like blasts from an open furnace-door. The soldiers fighting in the Carnia, on the other hand, not infrequently wear coats of white fur to protect them from the cold and to render them invisible against the expanses of snow. When I was on the Italian front they told me an incident of this mountain warfare. There was desperate fighting for the possession of a few yards of mountain trenches and a half-battalion of Austrian Jaegers—nearly five hundred men—were enfiladed by machine-gun fire and wiped out. That night there was a heavy snowfall and the Austrian corpses sprawled

upon the mountainside were soon buried deep beneath the fleecy flakes. The long winter wore along, the war pursued its dreary course, to five hundred Austrian homes the Austrian War Office sent a brief message that the husband or son or brother had been "reported missing." Then the spring came, the snow melted from the mountainsides, and the horrified Italians looked on the five hundred Austrians, frozen stiff, as meat is frozen in a refrigerator, in the same attitudes in which they had died months before.

With countless hair-pin, hair-raising turns, our road wound upward, bordered on one hand by the brinks of precipices, on the other by bare walls of rock. It was a smooth road, splendidly built, but steep and terrifyingly narrow—so narrow in places that it was nothing more than a shelf blasted from the sheer face of the cliff. Twice, meeting motor-lorries downward bound, we had to back along that narrow shelf, with our outer wheels on the brink of emptiness,

until we came to a spot where there was room to pass. It was a ticklish business.

At one point a mountain torrent leaped from the cliff into the depths below. But the water-power was not permitted to go to waste; it had been skilfully harnessed and was being used to run a completely equipped machine-shop where were brought for repair everything from motor-trucks to machine-guns. That was one of the things that impressed me most—the mechanical ability of the Italians. The rail-ways, cable-ways, machine-shops, bridges, roads, reservoirs, concrete works that they have built, more often than not in the face of what would appear to be unsurmountable difficulties, prove them to be a nation of engineers.

Up to the heights toward which we were climbing so comfortably and quickly in a motor-car there was before the war, so I was told, nothing but a mule-path. Now there is this fine military road, so ingeniously graded and zigzagged that two-ton motor-trucks can now go with ease where before a donkey had

difficulty in finding a footing. When these small and handy motor-trucks come to a point where it is no longer possible for them to find traction, their loads are transferred to the remarkable wire-rope railways, or *teleféricas,* as they are called, which have made possible this campaign in cloudland. Similar systems are in use, all over the world, for conveying goods up the sides of mountains and across chasms. A wire rope running over a drum at each side of the chasm which has to be crossed forms a double line of overhead railway. Suspended on grooved wheels from this overhead wire are "cars" consisting of shallow iron trays about the length and width of coffins, one car going up as the other comes down. The floors of the cars are perforated so as to permit the draining off of water or blood—for men wounded in the mountain fighting are frequently brought down to the hospitals in them—and the sides are of latticework, and, I might add, quite unnecessarily low. Nor is the prospective passenger reassured by being told that there have been

several cases where soldiers, suddenly overcome by vertigo, have thrown themselves out while in mid-air. If the cars are properly loaded, and if there is not a high wind blowing, the *teleferica* is about as safe as most other modes of conveyance, but should the cars have been carelessly loaded, or should a strong wind be blowing, there is considerable danger of their coming into collision as they pass. In such an event there would be a very fair chance of the passenger spattering up the rocks a thousand feet or so below. There is still another, though a rather remote possibility: that of being shelled while in mid-air, for certain of the *telefericas* run within view of the Austrian positions. And sometimes the power which winds the drum gives out and the car and its passengers are temporarily marooned in space. Aviation, motor-racing, mountain-climbing, big-game hunting, all seem commonplace and tame compared with the sensation of swinging helplessly in a shallow bathtub over half a mile of emptiness while an Austrian battery endeavors

to pot you with shrapnel, very much as a small boy throws stones at a scared cat clinging to a limb.

Yet over these slender wires has been transported an army, with its vast quantities of food, stores, and ammunition, and by the same method of transportation have been sent back the wounded. Without this ingenious device it is doubtful if the campaign in the High Alps could ever have been fought. But the cables, strong though they are, are yet too weak to bear the weight of the heavy guns, some of them weighing forty and fifty tons, which the Italians have put into action on the highest peaks. So, by the aid of ropes and levers and pulleys and hundreds of brawny backs and straining arms, these monster pieces have been hauled up slopes as steep as that of the Great Pyramid, have been hoisted up walls of rock as sheer and high as those of the Flatiron Building. You question this? Well, there they are, great eight and nine inch monsters, high above the highest of the wire roads, one

of them that I know of at a height of ten thousand feet above the sea. There is no doubting it, incredible as it may seem, for they speak for themselves—as the Austrians have found to their cost.

The most advanced positions in the Carnia, as in the Trentino, are amid the eternal snows. Here the guns are emplaced in ice caverns which can be reached only through tunnels cut through the drifts; here the men spend their days wrapped in shaggy furs, their faces smeared with grease as a protection from the stinging blasts, and their nights in holes burrowed in the snow, like the igloos of Esquimaux. On no front, not on the sun-scorched plains of Mesopotamia, nor in the frozen Mazurian marshes, nor in the blood-soaked mud of Flanders, does the fighting man lead so arduous an existence as up here on the roof of the world. I remember standing with an Italian officer in an observatory in the lower mountains. The powerful telescope was

trained on the snow-covered summit of one of the higher peaks.

"Do you see that little black speck on the snow at the very top?" the officer asked me.

I told him that I did.

"That is one of our positions," he continued. "It is held by a lieutenant and thirty Alpini. I have just received word that, as the result of yesterday's snow-storm, our communications with them have been cut off. We will not be able to relieve them, or get supplies to them, much before next April."

And it was then only the middle of December!

In the Carnia and on the Upper Isonzo one finds the anomaly of first-line trenches which are perfectly safe from attack. I visited such a position. Through a loophole I got a little framed picture of the Austrian trenches not five hundred yards away, and above them, cut in the mountainside, the square black openings within which lurked the Austrian guns. Yet we were as safe from anything save artillery

fire as though we were in Mars, for between the Italian trenches and the Austrian intervened a chasm half a thousand feet deep and with walls as steep and smooth as the side of a house. The narrow strip of valley at the bottom of the chasm was a sort of no man's land, where forays, skirmishes, and all manner of desperate adventures took place nightly between patrols of Jaegers and Alpini.

As with my field-glasses I was sweeping the turmoil of trench-scarred mountains which lay spread, below me, like a map in bas-relief, an Austrian battery quite suddenly set up a deafening clamor, and on a hillside, miles away, I could see its shells bursting in clouds of smoke shot through with flame. They looked like gigantic white peonies breaking suddenly into bloom. The racket of the guns awoke the most extraordinary echoes in the mountains. It was difficult to believe that it was not thunder. Range after range caught up the echoes of that bombardment and passed them on until it seemed as though they must have

reached Vienna. For half an hour, perhaps, the cannonade continued, and then, from an Italian position somewhere above and behind us, came a mighty bellow which drowned out all other sounds. It was the angry voice of Italy bidding the Austrians be still.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROAD TO TRIESTE

IN order to appraise the Italian operations on the Carso at their true value, it is necessary to go back to May, 1916, when the Archduke Frederick launched his great offensive from the Trentino. Now it must be kept constantly in mind, as I have tried to emphasize in preceding chapters, that when the war opened, the Italians had always to go up while the Austrians needed only to come down. The latter, intrenched high on that tremendous natural rampart formed by the Rhaetian and Tyrolean Alps, the Dolomites, the Carnic, Julian, and Dinaric ranges, had an immense superiority over their enemy on the plains below. The Austrian offensive in the Trentino was dictated by four reasons: first, to divert the Italians from their main objective, Trieste; second, to lessen the pressure which General

Cadorna was exerting against the Austrian lines on the Isonzo; third, to smash through to Vicenza and Verona, thus cutting off and compelling the capitulation of the Italian armies operating in Venetia; and fourth, to so thoroughly discourage the Italians that they would consent to a separate peace.

The story of how this ambitious plan was foiled is soon told. By the first week in May the Austrians had massed upon the Trentino front a force of very nearly 400,000 men with 2,000 guns. Included in this tremendous accumulation of artillery were 26 batteries of 12-inch guns and several of the German giants, the famous 42-centimetre pieces, which brought down the pride of Antwerp and Namur. By the middle of May everything was ready for the onset to begin, and this avalanche of soldiery came rolling down the Asiago plateau, between the Adige and the Brenta. Below them, basking in the sunshine, stretched the alluring plains of Venetia, with their wealth, their women, and their wine. Pounded

by an immensely superior artillery, overwhelmed by wave upon wave of infantry, the Italians sullenly fell back, leaving the greater part of the Sette Communi plateau and the upper portion of the Brenta valley in the hands of the Austrians. At the beginning of June a cloud of despondency and gloom hung over Italy, and men went about with sober faces, for it seemed all but certain that the enemy would succeed in breaking through to Vicenza, and by cutting the main east-and-west line of railway, would force the armies operating on the Isonzo and in the Carnia to surrender. But the soldiers of the Army of the Trentino, though outnumbered in men and guns, determined that the Austrians should pay a staggering price for every yard of ground they gained. They fought as must have fought their ancestors of the Roman legions. And, thanks to their tenacity and pluck, they held their opponents on the five-yard line. Then, just in the nick of time, the whistle blew. The game was over. The Austrians had to hurry home.

They had staked everything on a sudden and overwhelming onslaught by which they hoped to smash the Italian defense and demoralize the Italian armies in time to permit at least half their eighteen divisions and nearly all of their heavy guns being withdrawn in a few weeks and rushed across Austria to the Galician front, where they were desperately needed to stay the Russian advance.

By the beginning of the last week in June the Austrian General Staff, recognizing that its plan for the overwhelming of northern Italy had failed disastrously, issued orders for a general retreat. The Austrians had planned to fall back on the positions which had been prepared in advance in the mountains and to establish themselves, with greatly reduced numbers, on this practically impregnable line, while the transfer of the divisions intended for the Carpathians was effected. But General Cadorna had no intention of letting the Austrians escape so easily. In less than a week he had collected from the garrisons and training camps and

reserve battalions an army of 500,000 men. It was one of the most remarkable achievements of the war. From all parts of Italy he rushed those half million men to the Trentino front by train—and despite the immense strain put upon the Italian railways by the rapid movement of so great a body of troops, the regular passenger service was suspended for only three days. (At that same time the American Government was attempting to concentrate a force of only 150,000 men on the Mexican border; a comparison of Italian and American efficiency is instructive.) He formed that army into brigades and divisions, each complete with staff and supply trains and ammunition columns. He organized fresh bases of supply, including water, of which there is none on the Asiago plateau. He provided the stupendous quantity of stores and ammunition and equipment and transport required by such an army. (It is related how Cadorna's Chief of Transport wired the Fiat Company of Turin that he must have 545 additional motor-trucks within a week,

and how that great company responded by delivering in the time specified 546—one over for good measure.) Almost in a night he transformed the rude mule-paths leading up onto the plateau into splendid military roads, wide enough and hard enough to bear the tremendous traffic to which they were suddenly subjected. And finally he rushed his troops up those roads in motor-cars and motor-trucks, afoot and on horse-back and astride of donkeys and flung them against the Austrians. So sudden and savage was the Italian onset that the Austrians did not dare to spare a man or gun for their Eastern Front—and meanwhile the Muscovite armies were pressing on toward the Dniester. It is no exaggeration to assert that the success of Brussiloff's offensive in Galicia was due in no small measure to the Italian counter-offensive in the Trentino. That adventure cost Austria at least 100,000 dead and wounded men.

But not for a moment did the Italians permit the Austrian offensive in the Trentino to dis-

tract them from their real objectives: Gorizia, the Carso, and Trieste. The "military experts," who from desks in newspaper offices tell the public how campaigns ought to be conducted, had announced confidently that Italy had so taxed her strength by her efforts in the Trentino that, for many months at least, nothing need be expected from her. But Italy showed the public that the "military experts" didn't know what they were talking about, for in little more than a month after the Italian guns had ceased to growl amid the Tyrolean peaks and passes, they were raining a storm of steel upon the Austrian positions on the Carso.

Imagine a vast limestone plateau, varying in height from 700 to 2,500 feet, which is as treeless and waterless as the deserts of Chihuahua, as desolate and forbidding as the Dakota Bad Lands, with a surface as torn and twisted and jagged as the lava beds of Utah, and with a summer climate like that of Death Valley in July. That is the Carso. This great tableland of rock, which begins at Gorizia, ap-

proaches close to the shores of the Adriatic between Monfalcone and Trieste, and runs southeastward into Istria, links the Alpine system with the Balkan ranges. Its surface of naked, sun-flayed rock is broken here and there with gigantic heaps of piled stone, with caves and caverns, with sombre marshes which sometimes become gloomy and forbidding lakes, and with peculiar crater-like depressions called *dolinas,* formed by centuries of erosion. Such scanty vegetation as there is is confined to these *dolinas,* which form the only oases in this barren and thirsty land. The whole region is swept by the *Bora,* a wind which is the enemy alike of plant and man. Save for the lizards that bask upon its furnace-like floors, the Carso is as lifeless as it is treeless and waterless. No bird and scarcely an insect can find nourishment over vast spaces of this sun-scorched solitude; even the hardy mountain grass withers and dies of a broken heart. So powerful is the sun that eggs can be cooked without a fire. Metal objects, such as rifles and equipment, when left

exposed, quickly become too hot to touch. The bodies of the soldiers who fall on the Carso are not infrequently found to have been baked hard and mummified after lying for a day or two on that oven-like floor of stone.

The Carso is probably the strongest natural fortress in the world. Anything in the shape of defensive works which Nature had overlooked, the Austrians provided. For years before the war began the Austrian engineers were at work strengthening a place that already possessed superlative strength. The whole face of the plateau was honeycombed with trenches and tunnels and dugouts and gun emplacements which were blasted and drilled out of the solid rock with machinery similar to that used in driving the Simplon and the St. Gothard tunnels. The posts for the snipers were armored with inch-thick plates of steel cemented into the rock. The *dolinas* were converted into machine-gun pits and bomb-proof shelters. In one of these curious craters I saw a dugout—it was really a subterranean bar-

racks—electrically lighted and with neatly whitewashed walls which had sleeping accommodation for a thousand men. To supply these positions, water was pumped up by oil-engines, but the Austrians took care to destroy the pipe-lines as they retired.

At the northern end of the Carso, in an angle formed by the junction of the Wippach and the Isonzo, the snowy towers and red-brown roofs of Gorizia rise above the foliage of its famous gardens. The town, which resembles Homburg or Baden-Baden and was a popular Austrian resort before the war, lies in the valley of the Wippach (Vippacco, the Italians call it), which separates the Carso from the southernmost spurs of the Julian Alps. Down this valley runs the railway leading to Trieste, Laibach, and Vienna. It will be seen, therefore, that Gorizia is really the gateway to Trieste, and a place of immense strategic importance.

On the slopes of the Carso, four or five miles to the southwest of the town, rises the enor-

mously strong position of Monte San Michele, and a few miles farther down the Isonzo, the fortified hill-town of Sagrado. On the other side of the river, almost opposite Gorizia, are the equally strong positions of Podgora and Monte Sabotino. Their steep slopes were slashed with Austrian trenches and abristle with guns which commanded the roads leading to the river, the bridge-heads, and the town. To take Gorizia until these positions had been captured was obviously out of the question. Here, as elsewhere, Austria held the upper ground. In a memorandum issued by the Austrian General Staff to its officers at the beginning of the operations before Gorizia, the tremendous advantage of the Austrian position was made quite clear: "We have to retain possession of a terrain fortified by Nature. In front of us a great watercourse; behind us a ridge from which we can shoot as from a ten-story building."

The difficulties which the Italians had to overcome in their advance were enormous.

From their mountain nests the Austrian guns were able to maintain a murderous fire on the Italian lines of communication, thus preventing the bringing up of men and supplies. It therefore became necessary for the Italians to build new roads which would not be thus exposed to enemy fire, and in cases where this was impossible, the existing roads were masked for miles on end with artificial hedges and screens of grass matting. In many places it was found necessary to screen the roads overhead as well as on the sides, so that the Italians could move up their heavy guns without attracting the attention of the enemy's observers stationed on the highest mountain peaks, or of the Austrian airmen. But this was not all, or nearly all. An army is ever a hungry monster, so slaughter-houses and bakeries and field-kitchens, to say nothing of incredible quantities of food-stuffs, had to be provided. Fighting being a thirsty business, it was necessary to arrange for piping up water, for great tanks to hold that water, and for water-carts, hundreds and hundreds of

them, to peddle it among the panting troops. A prize-fighter cannot sleep out in the open, on the bare ground, and keep in condition for the ring, and a soldier, who is likewise a fighting-man but from a different motive, must be made comfortable of nights if he is to keep in fighting-trim. So millions of feet of lumber had to be brought up, along roads already overcrowded with traffic, and that lumber had to be transformed into temporary huts and barrackments—a city of them. But the preparations did not end even there. To insure the co-ordination and co-operation of the various divisions of the army, an elaborate system of field telegraphs and telephones had to be installed, and, in order to provide against the lines being cut by shell-fire and the whole complex organism paralyzed, the wires were laid in groups of four. Then there had to be repair-stations for the broken machinery, and other repair-stations—with Red Cross flags flying over them—for the broken men. So in the rear of the sector where the Italians planned

to give battle on a front of thirty miles, a series of great base hospitals were established, and, nearer the front, a series of clearing-hospitals, and, still closer up, field-hospitals, and in the immediate rear of the fighting-line, hundreds of dressing-stations and first-aid posts were located in dugouts and bomb-proof shelters. And along the roads stretched endless caravans of gray ambulances, for it promised to be a bloody business. In other words, it was necessary, before the battle could be fought with any hope of success, to build what was to all intents and purposes a great modern city, a city of half a million inhabitants, with many miles of macadamized thoroughfares, with water and telephone and telegraph systems, with a highly efficient sanitary service, with railways, with huge warehouses filled with food and clothing, with more hospitals than any city ever had before, with butcher-shops and bakeries and machine-shops and tailors and boot-menders—in fact, with everything necessary to meet the demands of 500,000 men. Yet Mr.

Bryan and his fellow-members of the Order of the Dove and Olive-Branch would have us believe that all that is necessary in order to win a modern battle is to take the trusty target-rifle from the closet under the stairs, dump a box of cartridges into our pockets, and sally forth, whereupon the enemy, decimated by the deadliness of our fire, will be only too glad to surrender.

The most formidable task which confronted the Italians was that of constructing the vast system of trenches through which the troops could be moved forward in comparative safety to the positions from which would be launched the final assault. This presented no exceptional difficulties in the rich alluvial soil on the Isonzo's western bank, but once the Italians had crossed the river they found themselves on the Carso, through whose solid rock the trenches could be driven only with pneumatic drills and dynamite. All of the Italian trenches that I saw showed a very high skill in engineering. Instead of keeping the earthen walls

from crumbling and caving by the use of the wicker-work revetments so general on the Western Front, the Italians use a sort of steel trellis which is easily put in place, and is not readily damaged by shell-fire. Other trenches which I saw (though not on the Carso, of course) were built of solid concrete with steel shields for the riflemen cemented into the parapets.

During these weeks of preparation the Italian aviators, observers, and spies had been busy collecting information concerning the strength of the Gorizia defenses and the disposition of the Austrian batteries and troops. By means of thousands of photographs taken from airplanes, enlarged, and then pieced together, the Italians had as accurate and detailed a map of the Austrian lines of defense as was possessed by the Austrian General Staff itself. Thanks to the data thus obtained, the Italian gunners were able to locate their targets and estimate their ranges with absolute precision. They knew which building in Gorizia was the head-

quarters of the Austrian commander; they had discovered where his telephone and telegraph stations were located; and they had spotted his observation posts. Indeed, so highly developed was the Italian intelligence service that the Austrians were not able to transfer a battalion or change the position of a battery without the knowledge of General Cadorna.

Now the Austrians, like the newspaper experts, were convinced that the Italians had their hands full in the Trentino without courting trouble on the Isonzo. And if there was to be an attack along the Isonzo front—which they doubted—they believed that it would almost certainly develop in the Monfalcone sector, next the sea. And of this belief the Italians took care not to disabuse them. Here again was exemplified the vital necessity of having control of the air. If, during the latter half of July, the Austrian fliers had been able to get over the Italian lines, they could not have failed to observe the enormous preparations which were in progress, and when the Italians

advanced, the Austrians would have been ready for them. But the Italians kept control of the air (during my entire trip on the Italian front I can recall having seen only one Austrian airplane), the Austrians had no means of learning what was impending, and were, therefore, quite unprepared for the attack when it came—and Gorizia fell.

By the 4th of August, 1916, all was ready for the Big Push. On the morning of that day brisk fighting began on the Monfalcone sector. Convinced that this was the danger-point, the Austrian commander rushed his reserves southward to strengthen his threatened line. This was precisely what the Italians wanted. They had succeeded in distracting his attention from their real objective—Gorizia. Now the battle of Gorizia was really not fought at Gorizia at all. What happened was the brilliant and bloody storming of the Austrian positions on Podgora and Monte Sabotino, a simultaneous crossing of the Isonzo opposite Gorizia and at Sagrado, and a splendid rush up to and across

the plateau of the Carso which culminated in the taking of Monte San Michele. Gorizia itself was not organized for defense, and so astounded was its garrison at the capture in rapid succession of the city's defending positions, which had been deemed impregnable, that no serious resistance was offered.

On the morning of August 6 a hurricane of steel suddenly broke upon Gorizia. But the Italian gunners had received careful instructions, and instead of blowing the city off the map, as they could easily have done, they confined their efforts to the destruction of the enemy's headquarters, observation posts, and telephone-stations, thus destroying his means of communication and effectually disrupting his entire organization. Other batteries turned their attention to the railway-station, the railway-yards, and the roads, dropping such a curtain of shell-fire behind the town that the Austrians were unable to bring up reinforcements. Care was taken, however, to do as little

damage as possible to the city itself, as the Italians wanted it for themselves.

The most difficult, as it was the most spectacular, phase of the attack was the storming of the Sabotino, a mountain two thousand feet high, which, it was generally believed, could never be taken with the bayonet. The Italians, realizing that no troops in the world could hope to reach the summit of those steep slopes in the face of barbed wire, rifles, and machine-guns, had, unknown to the enemy, driven a tunnel, a mile and a quarter long, into the very heart of this position. When the assault was ordered, therefore, the first lines of Italian infantry suddenly appeared from out of the ground within a few yards of the Austrian trenches. Amid a storm of *vivas* the gray wave, with its crest of glistening steel, surged up the few remaining yards of glacis, topped the parapet, and overwhelmed the defenders. Monte Sabotino, the key to the bridge-head and the city, was in the hands of the Italians. But the Austrians intrenched on Hill 240, the highest summit of the

Podgora range, still held out, and it took several hours of savage fighting to dislodge them. This last stronghold taken, the gray-clad infantry suddenly debouched from the sheltering ravines and went swarming down to the Isonzo. Almost simultaneously another division crossed the river several miles below, at Sagrado. Into the stream they went, their rifles held high above their heads, chanting the splendid hymn of Garibaldi. The Austrian shrapnel churned the river into foam, its waters turned from blue to crimson, but the insistent bugles pealed the charge, and the lines of gray swept on. Pausing on the eastern bank only long enough to re-form, the lines again rolled forward. White disks carried high above the heads of the men showed the Italian gunners how far the infantry had advanced and enabled them to gauge their protecting curtain of fire. Though smothered with shells, and swept by machine-guns, nothing could stop them. "Avanti Savoia!" they roared. "Viva! Eviva Italia!"

Meanwhile, under a heavy fire, the Italian engineers were repairing the iron bridge which carried the railway from Milan and Udine across the Isonzo to Gorizia and so to Trieste and Vienna. The great stone bridge over the river had been destroyed the day before beyond the possibility of immediate repair. In an amazingly short time the work was done and the Italian field-batteries went tearing over the bridge at a gallop to unlimber on the opposite bank and send a shower of shrapnel after the retreating Austrians. Close behind the guns poured Carabinieri, Alpini, Bersaglieri, infantry of the line and squadron after squadron of cavalry riding under thickets of lances. A strong force of Carabinieri were the first troops to enter the city, and not until they had taken complete possession and had assumed the reins of the local government, were the line troops permitted to come in.

The fighting continued for three days, the Austrians, though discouraged and to some extent demoralized, making a brave resistance.

In one *dolina* which had been fortified, an officer and a handful of men fought so pluckily against overwhelming odds that, when at length the survivors came out and surrendered, the Italians presented arms to them as a mark of respect and admiration. By the evening of the 9th of August the attack, "one of the most important and violent onslaughts on fortified positions that the European War has yet seen," had been completely successful, and the city of Gorizia, together with the heights that guarded it, including the northern end of the Carso plateau, were in Italian hands. The cost to Italy was 20,000 dead men. It was a high price but, on the other hand, she captured 19,000 prisoners, 67 pieces of artillery, and scores of trench mortars and machine-guns. The moral and strategic results were of incalculable value. The first line of the Austrian defense, deemed one of the strongest on any front, had collapsed beneath the Italian assaults; though the crest of the Carso still remained in Austrian hands, the gateway

to Trieste had been opened; and most important of all, the Italian people had gained the self-confidence which they had long lacked and which comes only from military achievement.

In order to reach Gorizia we had to motor for some miles along a road exposed to enemy fire, for the hills dominating the city to the south and east were still in Austrian hands. The danger was minimized as much as possible by screening the roads in the manner I have already described, so, as the officer who accompanied me took pains to explain, if we happened to be hit by a shell, it would be one fired at random. I could see no reason, however, why a random shell wouldn't end my career just as effectually as a shell intended specially for me. Although, thanks to the tunnels of matting, the Austrians cannot see the traffic on the roads, they know that it must cross the bridges, so on them they keep up a continuous rain of projectiles, and there you have to take your chance. The Gorizia

bridge-head was not a place where I should have cared to loiter.

It is not a simple matter to obtain permission to visit Gorizia (it is much easier to visit Verdun), for the city is shelled with more or less regularity, and to have visitors about under such conditions is a nuisance. Hence, one cannot get into Gorizia unless bearing a special pass issued by the Comando Supremo. So rigid are the precautions against unauthorized visitors that, though accompanied by two officers of the Staff and travelling in a staff-car, we were halted by the Carabinieri and our papers examined seven times. To this famous force of constabulary has been given the work of policing the occupied regions, and indeed, the entire zone of the armies. With their huge cocked hats, which, since the war began, have been covered with gray linen, their rosy faces, so pink-and-white that they look as though they had been rouged and powdered, and their little upturned waxed mustaches, the Carabinieri always remind me

of the gendarmes in comic operas. But the only thing comic about them is their hats. They are the sternest and most uncompromising guardians of the law that I know. You can expostulate with a London bobbie, you can argue with a Paris gendarme, you can on occasion reason mildly with a New York policeman, but not with an Italian carbineer. To give them back talk is to invite immediate and serious trouble. They are supreme in the war zone, for they take orders from no one save their own officers and have the authority to turn back or arrest any one, no matter what his rank. Our chauffeur, who, being attached to the Comando Supremo, had become so accustomed to driving generals and cabinet ministers that he blagued the military sentries, and quite openly sneered at the orders of the Udine police, would jam on his brakes so suddenly that we would almost go through the wind-shield if a carbineer held up his hand.

Gorizia is, or was before the war, a place of some 40,000 inhabitants. It has broad streets,

lined by fine white buildings and lovely gardens, and outside the town are excellent medicinal baths. It will, I think, prove a very popular summer resort with the Italians. Though for many months prior to its capture it was within range of the Italian guns, which could have blown it to smithereens, they refrained from doing so because it was desired, if possible, to take the place intact. That, indeed, has been the Italian policy throughout the war: to do as little unnecessary damage as possible. Now the Austrians, who look down on their lost city from the heights to the eastward, refrain from destroying it, as they easily could do, because they cling to the hope that they may get it back again. So, though the bridge-heads are shelled constantly, and though considerable damage has been inflicted on the suburbs, no serious harm has been done to the city itself. By this I do not mean to imply that the Austrians never shell it, for they do, but only in a desultory, half-hearted fashion. During the day that I spent

in Gorizia the deserted streets echoed about every five minutes to the screech-bang of an Austrian *arrivé* or the bang-screech of an Italian *départ*.

Finding that the big Hotel du Parc, which is the city's leading hostelry, was closed, we lunched at the more modest Hotel de la Poste. Our luncheon was served us in the kitchen, as, shortly before our arrival, the dining-room had been wrecked by an Austrian shell. Though this had naturally somewhat upset things, we had a really excellent meal: *minestrone,* which, so far as I could discover, is the only variety of soup known to the Italians, mutton, vegetables, a pudding, fruit, the best coffee I have had in Europe since the war began, and a bottle of fine old Austrian wine, which, like the German vintages, is no longer procurable in the restaurants of *civilized* Europe. While we ate, there was a brisk exchange of compliments between the Italian and Austrian batteries in progress above the roofs of the town. The table at which we sat was pushed close

up against one of the thick masonry columns which supported the kitchen ceiling. It probably would not have been much of a protection had a shell chanced to drop in on us, but it was wonderfully comforting.

I was accompanied on my visit to Gorizia by Signor Ugo Ojetti, the noted Florentine connoisseur who has been charged with the preservation of all the historical monuments and works of art in the war zone. About this charming and cultured genlteman I was told a characteristic story. In the outskirts of Gorizia stands the château of an Austrian nobleman who was the possessor of a famous collection of paintings. Now it is Signor Ojetti's business to save from injury or destruction all works of art which are worth saving, and, after ticketing and cataloguing them, to ship them to a place of safety to be kept until the war is over, when they will be restored to their respective owners. Though the château in question was within the Italian lines, the windows of the ballroom, in which

hung the best of the pictures, were within easy range of the Austrian snipers, who, whenever they saw any one moving about inside, would promptly open a brisk rifle fire. Scarcely had Ojetti and his assistant set foot within the room when *ping* came an Austrian bullet through the window, shattering the crystal chandelier over their heads. Then was presented the extraordinary spectacle of the greatest art critic in Italy crawling on hands and knees over a ballroom floor, taking care to keep as close to that floor as possible, and pausing now and then to make a careful scrutiny of the canvases that hung on the walls above him. "That's probably an Allori," he would call to his assistant. "Remember to take that down after it gets dark. The one next to it is good too—looks like a Bordone, though I can't be certain in this light. But don't bother about that picture over the fireplace—it's only a copy and not worth saving. Let the Austrians have it if they want it."

And they told me that through it all he never once lost his dignity or his monocle.

Another interesting figure who joined our little party in Gorizia was a monk who had served as a regimental chaplain since the beginning of the war. He was a broad-shouldered, brown-bearded fellow and, had it not been for the scarlet cross on the breast of his uniform, I should have taken him for a fine type of the Italian fighting man. I rather suspect, though, that when the bugles pealed the signal for the attack, he quite forgot that the wearers of the Red Cross are supposed to be non-combatants. During the Austrian offensive in the Trentino, an Italian army chaplain was awarded the gold medal for valor, the highest military decoration, because he rallied the men of his regiment after all the officers had fallen and led them in the storming of an Austrian position held by a greatly superior force. Another chaplain who had likewise assumed command of officerless troops was awarded the silver medal for valor. As

the duties of the army chaplains are supposed to be confined to giving the men spiritual advice, the doubt arose as to whether they were justified in actually fighting, thus risking the loss of their character as non-combatants. This puzzling question was, therefore, submitted to the Pope, who decided that chaplains assuming command of troops who had lost their officers in battle were merely discharging their duty, as they encouraged the men to resist in self-defense. In addition to the regimental chaplains there are, so I was told, thousands of priests and monks serving in the ranks of the Italian armies. Whether, after leading the exciting and adventurous life of a soldier, these men will be content to resume the sandals and the woollen robe, and to go back to the sheltered and monotonous existence of the monastic orders, I very strongly doubt. In any event, their sympathies will have been deepened and their outlook on life immensely broadened.

It rained in torrents during my stay in

Gorizia, but, as we recrossed the Isonzo onto the Friulian plain, the sinking sun burst through a rift in the leaden clouds and turned into a huge block of rosy coral the red rampart of the Carso. Beyond that wall, scarce a dozen miles as the airplane flies, but many times that distance as the big gun travels, lies Trieste. It will be a long road, a hard road, a bloody road which the Italians must follow to attain their City of Desire, and before that journey is ended the red rocks of the Carso will be redder still. But they will finish the journey, I think. For these iron-hard, brown-faced men, remember, are the stuff from which was made those ever-victorious legions that built the Roman Empire—and it is the dream of founding another Empire which is beckoning them on.

V

WITH THE RUSSIANS IN CHAMPAGNE

WHEN the French have been pestered for permission to visit the front by some foreigner—usually an American—until their patience has been exhausted, or when there comes to Paris a visitor to whom, for one reason or another, they wish to show attention, they send him to Rheims. Artists, architects, ex-ambassadors, ex-congressmen, lady journalists, manufacturers in quest of war orders, bankers engaged in floating loans, millionaires who have given or are likely to give money to war-charities, editors of obscure newspapers and monthly magazines, are packed off weekly, in personally conducted parties of a dozen or more, on a day's excursion to the City of the Desecrated Cathedral. They grow properly indignant over the cathedral's shattered beauties, they visit the famous

wine-cellars, they hear the occasional crack of a rifle or the crash of a field-gun,* and, upon their return, they write articles for the magazines, and give lectures, and to their friends at home send long letters—usually copied in the local papers—describing their experiences "on the firing-line." "Visiting the front" has, indeed, become as popular a pastime among Americans in Paris as was racing at Longchamps and Auteuil before the war. Hence, no place in the entire theatre of war has had so much advertising as Rheims. No sector of the front has been visited by so many civilians. That is why I am not going to say anything about Rheims—at least about its cathedral. For there is nothing left to say.

Five minutes of brisk walking from the cathedral brings one to the entrance of the famous wine-cellars of Pommery et Cie, the property of the ancient family of de Polignac.

* Since this was written the Germans have bombarded Rheims so heavily, with the evident intention of completing its destruction, that the French military authorities have ordered the evacuation of the civil population.

The space in this underground city is about equally divided between champagne and civilians, for several hundred of the townspeople, who sought refuge here in the opening weeks of the war, still make these gloomy passages their home. As the *caves* have a mean temperature of fifty degrees Fahrenheit they are comfortable enough, and, as they are fifty feet below the surface of the earth, they are safe. So there the more timid citizens live, rent-free, and will continue to live, no doubt, until the end of the war. In normal times, there are shipped from these cellars each day thirty thousand bottles of champagne, and even now, despite the proximity of the Germans—their trenches are only a few hundred yards away—the work of packing and shipping goes on much as usual, though, of course, on a greatly reduced scale, averaging, so I was told, eight thousand bottles daily. By far the greater part of this goes to America, for nowadays Europeans do not buy champagne.

To the red-faced, white-waistcoated, pros-

perous-looking gentlemen who scan so carefully the hotel wine-lists, I feel sure that it will come as a relief to learn that, though there was no 1916 crop of champagne, the vintages of 1914 and 1915 were exceptionally fine—*grands vins* they will probably be labelled. (And they ought to be, for the vines were watered with the bravest blood of France.) I don't suppose it would particularly interest those same complacent gentlemen, though, were I to add that the price of one of those gilt-topped bottles would keep a French child from cold and hunger for a month.

A few hours before I visited the cellars, a workman, loading cases of champagne in front of the company's offices for export to the United States, was blown to pieces by a German shell. They showed me the shattered columns of the office-building, and on the cobbles of the little square pointed out an ugly stain. So, when I returned to America, and in a famous restaurant, where I was dining, saw white-shirted men and white-shouldered

women sipping glasses abrim with the sparkling wine of Rheims, the picture of those blood-stained cobbles in that French city flashed before me, and I experienced a momentary sensation of disgust, for it seemed to me that in the amber depths I caught a stain of crimson. But of course it was only my imagination. Still, I was glad when it came time to leave, for the scene was too suggestive in its contrast to be pleasant: we, in America, eating and drinking and laughing; they, over there in Europe, fighting and suffering and hungering.

Leaving Rheims, we took a great gray car and drove south, ever south, until, as darkness was falling, we reached the headquarters of General Jilinsky, commanding the Russian forces fighting in Champagne. Here the Russians have two infantry brigades, with a total of 16,000 men; there is a third brigade at Salonika. The last time the Russians were in France was in 1814, and then they were there

for a different purpose. Little could Napoleon have dreamed that they, who helped to dethrone him, would come back, a century later, as France's allies. Yet this war has produced stranger coincidences than that. The British armies, disembarking at Rouen, tramp through that very square where their ancestors burned the Maid of Orleans. And at Pont des Briques, outside Boulogne, where Napoleon waited impatiently for weeks in the hope of being able to invade England, is now situated the greatest of the British base camps.

General Jilinsky reminded me of a fighting-cock. He is a little man, much the height and build of the late General Funston, with hair cropped close to the skull, after the Russian fashion; through a buttonhole of his green service tunic was drawn the orange-and-black ribbon of the Order of St. George. He can best be described as "a live wire." His staff-officers impressed me as being as efficient and razor-keen as their chief. The general asked me if I would like to visit his trenches, and I

assured him that it was the hope of being permitted to do so which had brought me there. Whereupon a staff-officer disappeared into the hall to return a moment later with a gas-mask in a tin case and a steel helmet covered with tan linen.

"You had better take these with you," he said. "There is nearly always something happening on our front, and there is no sense in taking unnecessary risks."

I soon found that the precaution was not an idle one, for, as our car drew up at the entrance to the *boyau* which led by devious windings into the first-line trenches, the group of officers and men assembled in front of brigade headquarters were hastily donning their masks: grotesque-looking contrivances of metal, cloth, and rubber, which in shape resembled a pig's snout.

"Gas," said my Russian companion briefly. "We will stay here until it is over."

Though we must have been nearly a mile behind the firing-line, the air was filled with a

sweetish, sickish smell which suggested both the operating-room and the laboratory. So faint and elusive was the odor that I hesitated to follow the example of the others and don my mask, until I remembered having been told at Souchez, on the British front, that a horse had been killed by gas when seven miles behind the lines.

It is a logical development of this use of chemicals as weapons that the horses in use on the French front are now provided with gas-masks in precisely the same manner as the soldiers. These masks, which are kept attached to the harness, ready for instant use, do not cover the entire face, as do those worn by the men, but only the mouth and nostrils. In fact they resemble the feeding-bags which cartmen and cab-drivers put on their horses for the midday meal. Generally speaking, the masks are provided only for artillery horses and those employed in hauling ammunition, though it now seems likely that if the cavalry gets a chance to go into action, masks will be

worn by the troopers and their horses alike. After a large gas attack the fumes sometimes settle down in the valleys far behind the lines, and hours may elapse before they are dissipated by the wind. As it not infrequently happens that one of these gas banks settles over a road on which it is imperative that the traffic be not interrupted, large signs are posted notifying all drivers to put the masks on their horses before entering the danger zone.

There are now three different kinds of gases in general use on the Western Front. The best known of these is a form of chlorine gas, which is liberated from cylinders or flasks, to be carried by the wind over the enemy's lines. Contrary to the popular impression, its use is not as general as the newspaper accounts have led the public to believe, for it requires elaborate preparation, can only be employed over comparatively flat ground, and then only when the wind is of exactly the right velocity, neither too light nor too strong. Another

form of asphyxiating gas is held in shells in liquid form, usually in lead containers. Upon the bursting of the shell, which is fired from an ordinary field-gun, the liquid rapidly evaporates and liberates the gas, a few inhalations of which are sufficient to cause death. The third type consists of lachrymal, or tear-producing, gas, which is used in the same way as the asphyxiating, but its effects are not fatal, merely putting a man out of action for a few hours. It is really, however, the most efficacious of the three types, as it does not evaporate as readily as the asphyxiating gas. As a well distributed fire of lachrymal shells will form a screen of gas which will last for several hours, they are often used during an attack to prevent the enemy from bringing up reinforcements. Another use is against artillery positions, the clouds of gas from the lachrymal shells making it almost impossible for the men to serve the guns. I was also told of these shells having been used with great success to surround the headquarters of a divisional com-

mander, disabling him and his entire staff during an attack.

Before a change in the wind dissipated the last odors of gas, darkness had fallen. "Now," said my cicerone, "we will resume our trip to the trenches." The last time that I had seen these trenches, which the Russians are now holding, was in October, 1915, during the great French offensive in Champagne, when I had visited them within a few hours after their capture by the French. On that occasion they had been so pounded by the French artillery that they were little more than giant furrows in the chalky soil, and thickly strewn along those furrows was all the horrid garbage of a battlefield: twisted and tangled barbed wire, splintered planks, shattered rifles, broken machine-guns, unexploded hand-grenades, knapsacks, water-bottles, pieces of uniforms, bits of leather, and, most horrible of all, the remains of what had once been human beings. But all this débris had long since been cleared away. Under the skilful hands of the Rus-

sians the rebuilt trenches had taken on a neat and orderly appearance. The earthen walls had been revetted with wire chicken-netting, and instead of tramping through ankle-deep mud, we had beneath our feet neat walks of corduroy. We tramped for what seemed interminable miles in the darkness, always zigzagging. Now and then we would come upon little fires, discreetly screened, built at the entrances to dugouts burrowed from the trench-walls. Over these fires soldiers in flat caps and belted greatcoats were cooking their evening meal. I had expected to see unkempt men wearing sheepskin caps, men with flat noses and matted beards, but instead I found clean-shaven, splendidly set-up giants, with the pink skins that come from perfect cleanliness and perfect health. Following the direction of the arrows on signs printed in both French and Russian, we at last reached the fire-trench, where dim figures looking strangely mediæval in their steel helmets, crouched motionless, peering out along their rifle-barrels into the

eerie darkness of No Man's Land. Here there was a sporadic illumination, for from the German trenches in front of us lights were rising and falling. They were very beautiful: slender stems of fire arching skyward to burst into blossoms of brilliant sparks, which illuminated the band of shell-pocked soil between the trenches as though it were day. Occasionally there would be a dozen of these star-shells in the air at the same time: they reminded me of the Fourth of July fireworks at Manhattan Beach. In the fire-trenches there is no talking save in whispers, but every now and then the almost uncanny silence would be punctuated by the sharp crack of a rifle, the *tut-tut-tut* of a mitrailleuse, or, from somewhere in the distance, the angry bark of a field-gun.

There was a whispered conversation between the officer in command of the trench and my guide. The latter turned to me.

"We have driven a sap to within thirty metres of the enemy," he said, "and have es-

tablished a listening-post out there. Would you care to go out to it?"

I would, and said so.

"No talking, then, if you please," he warned me, "and as little noise as possible."

This time the *boyau* was very narrow, and writhed between its earthen walls like a dying snake. We advanced on tiptoe, as cautiously as though stalking big game—as, indeed, we were. Ten minutes of this slow and tortuous progress brought us to the *poste d'écoute*. In a space the size of a hall bedroom half a score of men stood in attitudes of strained expectancy, staring into the blackness through the loopholes in their steel shields. There being no loophole vacant, I took a chance and, standing on the firing step, raised my head above the level of the parapet and made a hurried survey of the few yards of No Man's Land which separated us from the enemy—a space so narrow that I could have thrown a stone across, yet more impassable than the deepest chasm. I was rewarded for the risk

by getting a glimpse of a dim maze of wire entanglements, and, just beyond, a darker bulk which I knew for the German trench. And I knew that from that trench sharp eyes were peering out into the darkness toward us just as we were trying to discern them. As I stepped down from my somewhat exposed position a soldier standing a few feet farther along the line raised *his* head above the parapet, as though to relieve his cramped muscles. Just then a star-shell burst above us, turning the trench into day. *Ping!!!* There was a ringing metallic sound, as when a 22-caliber bullet strikes the target in a shooting-gallery, and the big soldier who had incautiously exposed himself crumpled up in the bottom of the trench with a bullet through his helmet and through his brain. The young officer in command of the listening-post cursed softly. "I'm forever warning the men not to expose themselves," he said irritatedly, "but they forget it the next minute. They're nothing but stupid children." He spoke in much the

same tone of annoyance he might have used if the man had been a clumsy servant who had broken a valuable dish. Then he went into the tiny dugout where the telephone was, and rang up the trench commander, and asked him to send out a bearer, for the *boyau* communicating with the listening-post was too narrow to admit the passage of a stretcher. The bearer arrived just as we started to return. He was a regular dray-horse of a man, with shoulders as massive and competent as those of a Constantinople *hamel*. Strapped to his back by a sort of harness was a contrivance which looked like a rude armchair with the legs cut off. His comrades hoisted the dead man onto the back of the live man, and with a rope took a few turns about the bodies of both. As we made our slow way back to the fire-trench, and so to the rear, there stumbled at our heels the grunting porter with his ghastly burden. Now and then I would glance over my shoulder and, in the fleeting glare of the star-shells, would glimpse, above the porter's straining

shoulders, the head of the dead soldier lolling inertly from side to side, as though very, very tired. . . . And I wondered if in some lonely cabin by the Volga a woman was praying for her boy.

VI

"THEY SHALL NOT PASS!"

GENERAL Gouraud, the one-armed hero of Gallipoli, who commands the forces in Champagne, is the most picturesque and gallant figure in all the armies of France. On my way south I stopped for a night in Chalons-sur-Marne to dine with him. He was living in a comfortable but modest house, evidently the residence of a prosperous tradesman. When I arrived I found the small and rather barely furnished salon filled with officers of the staff, in uniforms of the beautiful horizon blue which is the universal dress of the French army. They were clustered about the marble-topped centre-table, on which, I imagine, the family Bible used to rest, but which now held the steel base of a 380-centimetre shell, which had fallen in a near-by village that afternoon. This monster projectile, as large as the largest

of those fired by our coast-defense guns, must have weighed considerably more than a thousand pounds and doubtless cost the Germans at least a thousand dollars, yet all the damage it had done was to destroy a tumble-down and uninhabited cottage, which proves that, save against permanent fortifications, there is a point where the usefulness of these abnormally large guns ceases. While we were discussing this specimen of Bertha Krupp's handicraft, the door opened and General Gouraud entered the room. Seldom have I seen a more striking figure: a tall, slender, graceful man, with a long, brown, spade-shaped beard which did not entirely conceal a mouth both sensitive and firm. But it was the eyes which attracted and held one's attention: great, lustrous eyes, as large and tender as a woman's, but which could on occasion, I fancy, become cold as steel, or angry as lightning. One sleeve of his tunic hung empty, and he leaned heavily on a cane, for during the landing at Gallipoli he was terribly wounded by a Turkish shell.

Covering his breast were glittering stars and crosses, which showed how brilliant had been his services in this and other wars. He is a remarkable man, this soldier with the beard of a *poilu* and the eyes of a poet, and, unless I am greatly mistaken, he is destined to go a long, long way.

It was the sort of dinner that one marks with a white milestone on the road of memory. The soldier-servants wore white-cotton gloves and there were flowers on the table and menus with quaint little military sketches in the corners. General Gouraud talked in his deep, melodious voice of other wars in which he had fought, in Annam and Morocco and Madagascar, and the white-mustached old general of artillery at my left illustrated, with the aid of the knives and forks, a new system of artillery fire, which, he assured me very earnestly, would make pudding of the German trenches. While the salad was being served one of the staff-officers was called to the telephone. When he returned the general raised inquiring eye-

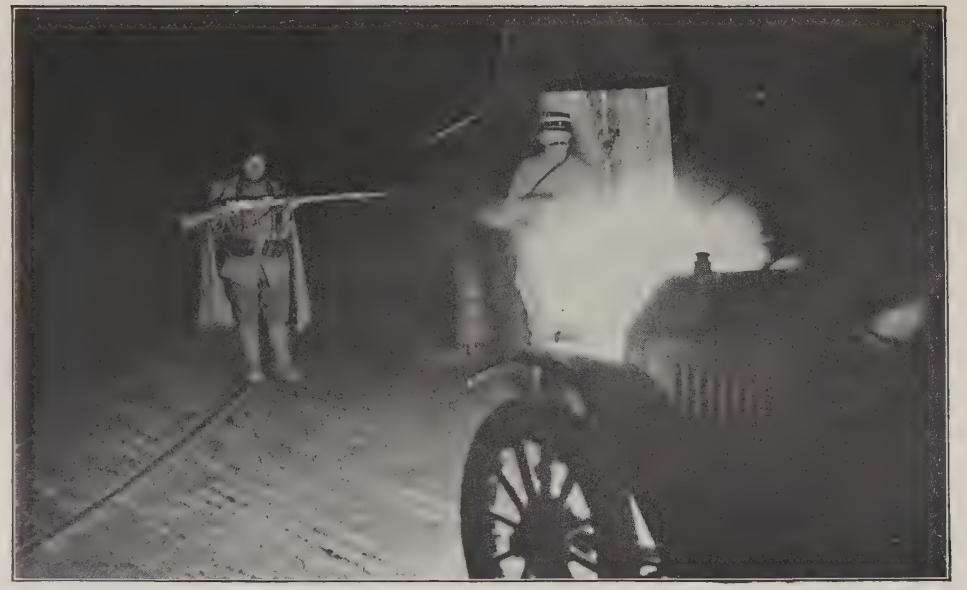
brows. *"N'importe, mon général,"* he answered. "Colonel ——— telephoned that the Boches attacked in force south of ———" and he named a certain sector, "but that we have driven them back with heavy losses." Then he resumed his interrupted dinner as unconcernedly as though he had been called to the telephone to be told that the Braves had defeated the Pirates in the ninth inning.

While we were at breakfast the next morning the windows of the hotel dining-room suddenly began to reverberate to the *bang-bang-bang* of guns. Going to the door, we saw, high overhead, a great white bird, which turned to silver when touched by the rays of the morning sun. Though shrapnel bursts were all about it—I counted thirty of the fleecy puffs at one time—it sailed serenely on, a thing of delicate beauty against the cloudless blue. Though few airplanes are brought down by artillery fire, the improvement in anti-aircraft guns has forced the aviators to keep at a height of from 12,000 to 17,000 feet, instead of 2,000, as they

did at the beginning of the war. The French gunners have now devised a system which, when it is successfully executed, makes things extremely uncomfortable for the enemy aviator. This system consists in so gauging the fire of the anti-aircraft guns that the airman finds himself in a "box" of shrapnel; that is, one shell is timed to burst directly in front of the machine, another behind it, one above, one below, and one on either side. The dimensions of this "box" of bursting shrapnel are gradually made smaller, so that, unless the aviator recognizes his danger in time, escape becomes impossible, and he is done for. Occasionally an aviator, finding himself caught in such a death-trap, pretends that he has been hit, and lets his machine flutter helplessly earthward, like a wounded bird, until the gunners, believing themselves certain of their prey, cease firing, whereupon the airman skilfully "catches" himself, and, straightening the planes of his machine, goes soaring off to safety. Navarre, one of the most daring of

the French fliers, so perfected himself in the execution of this hazardous ruse that he would let go of the controls and permit his machine to literally fall, sometimes from a height of a mile or more, making no attempt at recovery until within sixty metres of the ground, when he would save himself by a hawk-like swoop in which his wheels would actually graze the earth.

The organization of the French air service, with its system of airplane and seaplane squadrons, dirigibles and observation balloons, schools, repair-shops, and manufactories, is entirely an outgrowth of the war. The airplanes are organized in *escadrilles,* usually composed of ten machines each, for three distinct purposes. The bombardment squadrons are made up of slow machines with great carrying capacity, such as the Voisin; the pursuit or battle squadrons—the *escadrilles de chasse*—are composed of small and very fast 'planes, such as the Spad and Nieuport; while the general utility squadrons, used for reconnoissance, artillery regulation, and photographing, usually



"*Halt!* Show Your Papers!"

On the roads in the war zone there are sentries at frequent intervals and they are all suspicious.

A Nieuport Biplane About to Take the Air.

The pursuit or battle squadrons—the *escadrilles de chasse*—are composed of small and very fast planes, such as the Spad and Nieuport.

consist of medium-speed, two-passenger machines like the Farman and the Caudron.

Until very recently the Nieuport biplane, which can attain a speed of one hundred and ten miles an hour, has been considered the fastest and most efficient, as it is the smallest, of the French battle-planes, but it is now outspeeded by the new Spad* machine, which has reached a speed of over one hundred and twenty miles an hour, and of which great hopes are entertained. The Spad, like the Nieuport, is a one-man apparatus, the machine-gun mounted on its upper plane being fired by the pilot with one hand, while with the other hand and his feet he operates his controls. On the "tractors," as the airplanes having the propellers in front are called, the machine-guns are synchronized so as to fire between the whirling blades. Garros, the famous French flier, was the first man to perfect a device for firing a machine-gun through a propeller. He armored the blades so that if struck by a bullet

* A nickname for the Hispana-Suiza.

they would not be injured. This was greatly improved upon by the Germans in the Fokker type, the fire of the machine-guns being automatically regulated so that it is never discharged when a blade of the propeller is directly in front of the muzzle. Since then various forms of this device have been adapted by all the belligerents. Another novel development of aerial warfare is the miniature wireless-sending apparatus with which most of the observation and artillery regulation machines are now equipped, thus enabling the observers to keep in constant touch with the ground. In addition to developing the fastest possible battle-planes, the French are making efforts to build more formidable craft for bombing purposes. The latest of these is a Voisin triplane, which has a total lifting capacity of two tons, carries a crew of five men, and is driven by four propellers, each operated by a 210-horse-power Hispana-Suiza motor. These new motors weigh only about two hundred kilograms, or a little over two pounds per horse-power.

During the past year the French have made most of their raids by nights. One reason for this is that raiding craft, which are comparatively slow machines, are so heavily laden with bombs that they are only able to perform straight flying and hence are easily brought down by the fast and quick-turning battle-planes. Daylight raids, moreover, necessitate an escorting fleet of fighting craft in order to protect the bombing machines, just as a dreadnought has to be protected by a screen of destroyers. Though the dangers of flying are considerably increased by darkness, the French believe this is more than compensated for by the fact that, being comparatively safe from attack by enemy aircraft or from the fire of anti-aircraft guns, the raiders can fly at a much lower altitude and consequently have a much better chance of hitting their targets.

One of the extremely important uses to which airplanes are now put is the destruction of the enemy's observation balloons, on which he depends for the regulation of his artillery

fire. An airplane which is to be used for this work is specially fitted with a number of rocket tubes which project in all directions, so that it looks like a pipe-organ gone on a spree. The rockets, which are fired by means of a keyboard not unlike that of a clavier, are loaded with a composition containing a large percentage of phosphorus and are fitted with gangs of barbed hooks. If the rocket hits the balloon these hooks catch in the envelope and hold it there, while the phosphorus bursts into a flame which it is impossible to extinguish. During the fighting before Verdun, eight French aviators, driving machines thus equipped, were ordered to attack eight German balloons. Six of the balloons were destroyed.

But the very last word in aeronautical development is what might be called, for want of a better term, an aerial submarine. I refer to seaplanes carrying in clips beneath the fuselage specially constructed 18-inch torpedoes. In the under side of this type of torpedo is an opening. When the torpedo is dropped

into the sea the water, pouring into this opening, sets the propelling mechanism in motion and the projectile goes tearing away on its errand of destruction precisely as though fired from the torpedo-tube of a submarine. It may be recalled that some months ago the papers printed an account of a Turkish transport, loaded with soldiers, having been torpedoed in the Sea of Marmora, the accepted explanation being that a submarine had succeeded in making its way through the Dardanelles. As a matter of fact, that transport was sunk by a torpedo dropped from the air! The pilot of a Short seaplane had winged his way over the Gallipoli Peninsula, had sighted the troop-laden transport steaming across the Marmora Sea, and, volplaning down until he was only twenty-five feet above the water and a few hundred yards from the doomed vessel, had jerked the lever which released the torpedo. As it struck the water its machinery was automatically set going, something that looked like a giant cigar went streaking through the waves

. . . there was a shattering explosion, and when the smoke cleared away the transport had disappeared. Whereupon the airman, his mission accomplished, flew back to his base in the Ægean. There may be stranger developments of the war than that, but if so I have not heard of them.

France is now (April, 1917) turning out between eight hundred and a thousand completely equipped airplanes a month, but a considerable proportion of these are for the use of her allies. I have asked many persons who ought to know how many airplanes France has in commission, and, though the replies varied considerably, I should say that she has at present somewhere between five thousand and seven thousand machines in or ready to take the air.*

Leaving Chalons in the gray dawn of a winter's morn, we fled southward again, through

* Though great numbers of American-built airplanes have been shipped to Europe, they are being used only for purposes of instruction, as they are not considered fast enough for work on the front.

Bar-le-Duc (the place, you know, where the jelly comes from) the words *"Caves voutés"* chalked on the doors of those buildings having vaulted cellars showing that air raids were of frequent occurrence, and so, through steadily increasing traffic, to Souilly, the obscure hamlet from which was directed the defense of Verdun. In the centre of the cobble-paved Grande Place stood the Mairie, a two-story building in the uncompromising style characteristic of most French provincial architecture. At the foot of the steps stood two sentries in mud-caked uniforms and dented helmets, and through the front door flowed an endless stream of staff-officers, orderlies, messengers, and mud-spattered despatch riders. In this village *mairie,* a score of miles behind the firing-line, were centred the nerve and vascular systems of an army of half a million men; here was planned and directed the greatest battle of all time. On the upper floor, in a large, light, scantily furnished room, a man with a great silver star on the breast of his light-blue tunic

sat at a table, bent over a map. He had rather sparse gray hair and a gray mustache and a little tuft of gray below the lower lip. His eyes were sunken and tired-looking, as though from lack of sleep, and his face and forehead were deeply lined, but he gave the impression, nevertheless, of possessing immense vitality and energy. He was a broad-shouldered, solidly built, four-square sort of man, with cool, level eyes, and a quiet, almost taciturn manner. It was General Robert Nivelle, the man who held Verdun for France. He it was who, when the fortress was quivering beneath the Germans' sledge-hammer blows, had quietly remarked: "They shall not pass!" *And they did not.*

I did not remain long with General Nivelle; to have taken much of such a man's time would have been a rank impertinence. I would go to Verdun? he inquired. Yes, with his permission, I answered. Everything had been arranged, he assured me. An officer who knew America well—Commandant Bunau-Varilla,

of Panama Canal fame—had been assigned to go with me.* As I was leaving I attempted to express to him the admiration which I felt for the fashion in which he had conducted the Great Defense. But with a gesture he waved the compliment aside. "It is the men out there in the trenches who should be thanked," he said. "They are the ones who are holding Verdun." I took away with me the impression of a man as stanch, as confident, as unconquerable as the city he had so heroically defended. A few weeks later he was to succeed Marshal Joffre to the highest field command in the gift of the French Government.

It is twenty miles from Souilly to Verdun, and the road has come to be known as La Voie Sacré—the Sacred Way—because on the uninterrupted flow of ammunition and supplies over that road depended the safety of the fortress. Three thousand men with picks and shovels, working day and night, kept the road

* Commandant Bunau-Varilla was really sent as a compliment to my companion, Mr. Arthur Page, editor of *The World's Work.*

in condition to bear up under the enormous volume of traffic. The railway to Verdun was so repeatedly cut by German shells that the French built a narrow-gauge line, which zigzags over the hills. Beside the road, at frequent intervals, I noted cisterns and watering-troughs, and huge overhead water-tanks; for an army—men, horses, and motor-cars—is incredibly thirsty. This elaborate water system is the work of Major Bunau-Varilla, who, fittingly enough, is the head of the *Service d'Eau des Armées.*

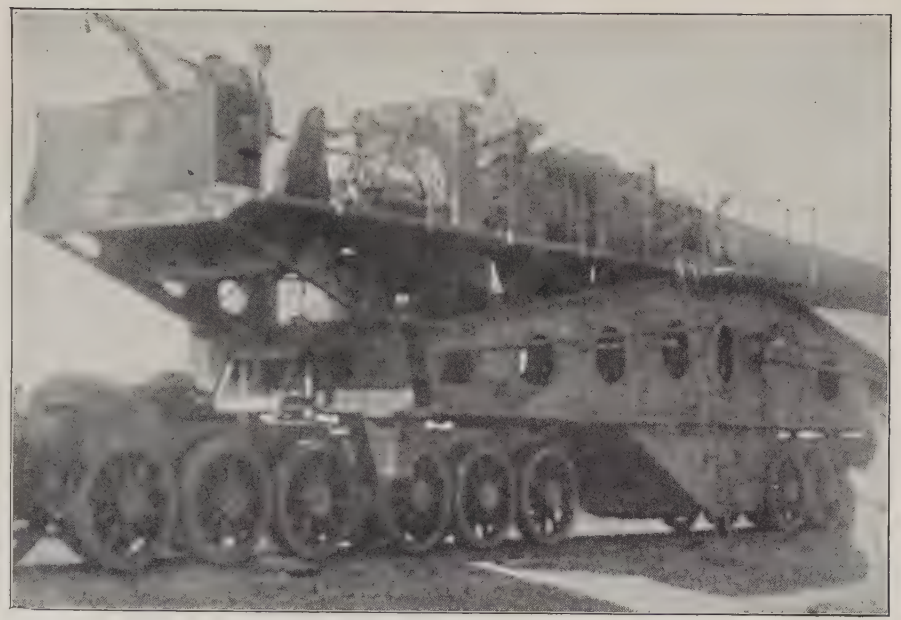
Half a dozen miles out of Souilly we crossed the watershed between the Seine and the Rhine and were in the valley of the Meuse. On the other side of yonder hill, whence came a constant muttering of cannon, was, I knew, the Unconquerable City.

While yet Verdun itself was out of sight, we came, quite unexpectedly, upon one of its mightiest defenders: a 400-millimetre gun mounted on a railway-truck. So streaked and striped and splashed and mottled with many

colors was it that, monster though it was, it escaped my notice until we were almost upon it. Suddenly a score or more of grimy men, its crew, came pelting down the track, as subway laborers run for shelter when a blast is about to be set off. A moment later came a mighty bellow; from the up-turned nose of the monster burst a puff of smoke pierced by a tongue of flame, and an invisible express-train went roaring eastward in the direction of the German lines. This was the mighty weapon of which I had heard rumors but had never seen: the great 16-inch howitzer with which the French had so pounded Fort Douaumont as to cause its evacuation by the Germans.

The French artillerists were such firm believers in the superiority of light over heavy artillery, and pinned such faith to their 75's, that they had paid scant attention to the question of heavy mobile guns. Hence when the German tidal wave rolled Parisward in 1914, the only heavy artillery possessed by the

French consisted of a very few 4.2-inch Creusot guns of a model adopted just prior to the war, and a limited number of batteries of 4.8-inch and 6.1-inch guns and howitzers; all of them, save only the 6.1-inch Rimailho howitzer of 1904, being models twenty to forty years old. These pieces were, of course, vastly outclassed in range and smashing power by the heavy guns of the Central Powers, such as the German 420's (the famous "42's") and the Austrian 380's. Undismayed, however, the French set energetically to work to make up their deficiencies. As it takes time to manufacture guns, large numbers of naval pieces were pressed into service, most of them being mounted on railway-trucks, thus insuring extreme mobility. The German 42's, I might mention in passing, lack this very essential quality, as they can be fired only from specially built concrete bases, from which they cannot readily be moved. The two German 42's which pounded to pieces the barrier forts of Antwerp were mounted on concrete platforms



Verdun's Mightiest Defender: a 400-mm. Gun.

This was the great 16-inch weapon with which the French so pounded Fort Douaumont as to cause its evacuation by the Germans.

A Gun Painted to Escape the Observation of Enemy Airmen.

"So streaked and striped and splashed and mottled with many colors was it that, monster though it was, it escaped my notice until we were almost upon it."

behind a railway embankment near Malines, where they remained throughout the siege of the city.

Some idea may be had of the variety of artillery in use on the French front when I mention that there are at least eleven calibers of guns, howitzers, and mortars, ranging in size from 9 inches to 20.8 inches, in action between Switzerland and the Somme. All of these, with a very few exceptions, are mounted on railway-trucks. In fact, the only large calibered piece not thus mounted is the Schneider mortar, a very efficient weapon, having a remarkably smooth recoil, which has a range of over six miles. It is transported, with its carriage and platform, in six loads, each weighing from four to five tons, about four hours being required to set up the piece ready for firing. Nearly all of these railway guns are, I understand, naval or coast-defense pieces, some of them being long-range weapons cut down to form howitzers or mortars, while others have been created by boring to a larger caliber a gun

whose rifling had been worn out in use. For example, the 400-millimetre, already referred to as having proved so effective against Douaumont, was, I am told, made by cutting down and boring out a 13.6-inch naval gun. But the master gun, the very latest product of French brains and French foundries, is the huge 520-millimetre (20.8-inch) howitzer which has just been completed at the Schneider works at Creusot. This, the largest gun in existence, has a length of 16 calibers (that is, sixteen times its bore, or approximately 28 feet), and weighs 60 tons. It fires a shell 7 feet long, weighing nearly 3,000 pounds, and carrying a bursting charge of 660 pounds of high explosive. Its range is 18 kilometres, or a little over eleven miles, though this can probably be increased if desired. This is France's answer to the German 42's, and, just as the latter shattered the forts of Liége, Antwerp, and Namur, so these new French titans will, it is confidently believed, humble the pride of Metz and Strasbourg.

So insistent has been the demand from the front for big guns, and yet more big guns, that new batteries are being formed every day. Generally speaking, the French plan is to assign short-range howitzers and mortars to the division; the longer range, horse-drawn guns —*hippomobile* the French designate them—to the army corps; while the tractor-drawn pieces and those mounted on railway-carriages are placed directly under the orders of the chief of artillery of each army.

A new, and in many respects one of the most effective weapons produced by the war is the trench mortar. These light and mobile weapons, of which the French have at least four calibers, ranging from 58-millimetres to 340-millimetres, are under the direction of the artillery, and should not be confused with the various types of bomb-throwers, which are operated by the infantry. The latest development in trench weapons is the Van Deuren mortar, which takes its name from the Belgian officer who is its inventor. Its chief peculiarity lies in the

fact that its barrel consists of a solid core instead of a hollow tube like all other guns. Attached to the base of the shell is a hollow winged shaft which fits over the core of the gun, the desired range being obtained by varying the length of the powder-chamber: that is, the distance between the end of the barrel and the base of the shell proper. The gun is fired at a fixed elevation, and is so small and light that it can readily be moved and set up by a couple of men in a few minutes. In no branch of the artillery has such advancement been made as in the trench mortars, which have now attained almost as great a degree of accuracy as the field-gun. Such great importance is attached to the trench mortars by the Italians that they have formed them into a distinct arm of the service, entirely independent of the artillery, the officers of the trench-mortar batteries, who are drawn from the cavalry, being trained at a special school.

The city of Verdun, or rather the blackened ruins which are all that remain of it, stands in

the centre of a great valley which is shaped not unlike a platter. Down this valley, splitting the city in half, meanders the River Meuse. The houses of Verdun, like those of so many mediæval cities, are clustered about the foot of a great fortified rock. From this rock Vauban, at the order of Louis XIV, blasted ramparts and battlements. To meet the constantly changing conditions of warfare, later generations of engineers gradually honeycombed the rock with passages, tunnels, magazines, store-rooms, halls, and casemates, a veritable labyrinth of them, thus creating the present Citadel of Verdun. Then, because the city and its citadel lie in the middle of a valley dominated by hills—like a lump of sugar in the middle of a platter—upon those hills was built a chain of barrier forts: La Chaume, Tavannes, Thiaumont, Vaux, Douaumont, and others. But when, at Liége and Namur, at Antwerp and Maubeuge, the Germans proved conclusively that no forts could long withstand the battering of their heavy guns, the French

took instant profit by the lesson. They promptly left the citadel and the forts nearest to it and established themselves in trenches on the surrounding hills, taking with them their artillery. This trench-line ran through certain of the small outlying forts, such as Tavannes, Thiaumont, Douaumont, and Vaux, and that is why you have read in the papers so much of the desperate fighting about them. Thus the much-talked-of fortress of Verdun was no longer a fortress at all, but merely a sector in that battle-line which extends from the Channel to the Alps. Barring its historic associations, and the moral effect which its fall might have in France and abroad, its capture by the Germans would have had no more strategic importance, if as much, than if the French line had been bent back for a few miles at Rheims, or Soissons, or Thann. The Vauban citadel in the city became merely an advanced headquarters, a telephone exchange, a supply station, a sort of central office, from the safety of whose subterranean casemates General Du-

bois, the commander of the city, directed the execution of the orders which he received from General Nivelle at Souilly, twenty miles away. Though the citadel's massive walls have resisted the terrific bombardments to which it has been subjected, it has neither guns nor garrison: they are far out on the trench-line beyond the encircling hills. It has, in fact, precisely the same relation to the defense of the Verdun sector that Governor's Island has to the defense of New York. This it is important that you should keep in mind. It should also be remembered that Verdun was held not for strategic but for political and sentimental reasons. The French military chiefs, as soon as they learned of the impending German offensive, favored the evacuation of the city, whose defense, they argued, would necessitate the sacrifice of thousands of lives without any corresponding strategic benefit. But the heads of the Government in Paris looked at things from a different point of view. They realized that, no matter how negligible

was its military value, the people of other countries, and, indeed, the French people themselves, believed that Verdun *was* a great fortress; they knew that its capture by the Germans would be interpreted by the world as a French disaster and that the morale of the French people, and French prestige abroad, would suffer accordingly. So, at the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute, when the preparations for evacuating the city were all but complete, imperative word was flashed from Paris that it must be held. And it was. Costly though the defense has been, the result has justified it. The Crown Prince lost what little military reputation he possessed—if he had any to lose; his armies lost 600,000 men in dead and wounded; and the world was shown that German guns and German bayonets, no matter how overwhelming in number, cannot break down the steel walls of France.

It was my great good fortune, when the fate of Verdun still hung in the balance, to visit the city and to lunch with General Dubois

and his staff in the citadel. Though the valor of the French infantry kept the Germans from entering Verdun, nothing could prevent the entrance of their shells. Seven hundred fell in one day. Not a single house in a city of 40,000 inhabitants remains intact. The place looks as though it had been visited simultaneously by the San Francisco earthquake, the Baltimore fire, and the Johnstown flood. But once in the shelter of the citadel and we were safe. Though German shells of large caliber were falling in the city at frequent intervals, the casemate in which we lunched was so far beneath the surface of the earth that the sound of the explosions did not reach us. It was as though we were lunching in a New York subway station: a great, vaulted, white-tiled room aglare with electric lights. We sat with General Dubois and the members of his immediate staff at a small table close to the huge range on which the cooking was being done, while down the middle of the room stretched one of the longest tables I have ever seen, at

which upward of a hundred officers—and one civilian—were eating. This lone civilian was a *commissaire* of police, and the sole representative of the city's civil population. When the Tsar bestowed the Cross of St. George on the city in recognition of its heroic defense, it was to this policeman, the only civilian who remained, that the Russian representative handed the badge of the famous order.

The *déjeuner,* though simple, was as well cooked and well served as though we were seated in a Paris restaurant instead of in a besieged fortress. And the first course was fresh lobster! I told General Dubois that my friends at home would raise their eyebrows incredulously when I told them this, whereupon he took a menu—for they had menus—and across it wrote his name and "Citadel de Verdun," and the date. "Perhaps that will convince them," he said, passing it to me. By this I do not mean to imply that the French commanders live in luxury. Far from it! But, though their food is very simple, it is

always well cooked (which is very far from being the case in our own army), and it is appetizingly served whenever circumstances permit.

After luncheon, under the guidance of the general, I made the rounds of the citadel. Here, so far beneath the earth as to be safe from even the largest shells, was the telephone-room, the nerve-centre of the whole complicated system of defense, with a switchboard larger than those in the "central office" of many an American city. By means of the thousands of wires focussed in that little underground room, General Dubois was enabled to learn in an instant what was transpiring at Douaumont or Tavannes or Vaux; he could pass on the information thus obtained to General Nivelle at Souilly; or he could talk direct to the Ministry of War, in Paris. I might add that one of the most difficult problems met with in this war has been the maintenance of communications during an attack. The telephone is the means most generally relied

upon, but in spite of multiplying the number of lines, they are all usually put out of commission during the preliminary bombardment, the wires connecting the citadel with Fort Douaumont and Fort de Vaux, for example, being repeatedly destroyed. For this reason several alternative means of communication have always to be provided, among these being flares and light-balls, carrier-pigeons, of which the French make considerable use, and optical signalling apparatus, this last method having been found the most effective. Sometimes small wireless outfits are used when the conditions permit. On a few occasions trained dogs have been used to send back messages, but, the pictures in the illustrated papers to the contrary, they have not proven a success. In the final resort, the most ancient method of all—the despatch bearer or runner—has still very frequently to be employed, making his hazardous trips on a motor-cycle when he can, on foot when he must.

In the room next to the telephone bureau

a dozen clerks were at work and typewriters were clicking busily; had it not been for the uniforms one might have taken the place for the office of a large and busy corporation, as, in a manner of speaking, it was. On another level were the bakeries which supplied the bread for the troops in the trenches; enormous storerooms filled with supplies of every description; an admirably equipped hospital with every cot occupied, usually by a "shrapnel case"; a flag-trimmed hall used by the officers as a club-room; and, on the upper levels, mess-halls and sleeping-quarters for the men. Despite the terrible strain of the long-continued bombardment, the soldiers seemed surprisingly cheerful, going about their work in the long, gloomy passages joking and whistling. They sleep when and where they can: on the bunks in the fetid air of the casemates; on the steps of the steep staircases that burrow deep into the ground; or on the concrete floors of the innumerable galleries. But sleeping is not easy in Verdun.

A short distance to the southwest of Verdun, on the bare face of a hill, is Fort de la Chaume. Like the other fortifications built to defend the city, it no longer has any military value save for purposes of observation. Peering through a narrow slit in one of its armored *observatoires,* I was able to view the whole field of the world's greatest battle—a battle which lasted a year and cost a million men—as from the gallery of a theatre one might look down upon the stage, the boxes, and the orchestra-stalls. Below me, rising from the meadows beside the Meuse, were the shattered roofs and fire-blackened walls of Verdun, dominated by the stately tower of the cathedral and by the great bulk of the citadel. The environs of the town and the hill slopes beyond the river were constantly pricked by sudden scarlet jets as the flame leaped from the mouths of the carefully concealed French guns, which seemed to be literally everywhere, while countless geyser-like irruptions of the earth, succeeded by drifting patches of white

vapor, showed where the German shells were bursting. Sweeping the landscape with my field-glasses, a long column of motor-trucks laden with ammunition came within my field of vision. As I looked there suddenly appeared, squarely in the path of the foremost vehicle, a splotch of yellow smoke shot through with red. When the smoke and dust had cleared away, the motor-truck had disappeared. The artillery officer who accompanied me directed my gaze across the level valley to where, beyond the river, rose the great brown ridge known as the Heights of the Meuse.

"Do you appreciate," he asked, "that on three miles of that ridge a million men—400,000 French and 600,000 Germans—have already fallen?"

Beyond the ridge, but hidden by it, were Hill 304 and Le Mort Homme of bloody memory, while on the horizon, looking like low, round-topped hillocks, were Forts Douaumont and de Vaux (what a thrill those names must give to every Frenchman!) and farther down

the slope and a little nearer me were Fleury and Tavannes. The fountains of earth and smoke which leaped upward from each of them at the rate of half a dozen to the minute, showed us that they were enduring a particularly vicious hammering by the Germans.

There are no words between the covers of the dictionary which can bring home to one who has not witnessed them the awful violence of the shell-storms which have desolated these hills about Verdun. In one week's attack to the north of the city the Germans threw five million shells, the total weight of which was forty-seven thousand tons. Eighty thousand shells rained upon one shallow sector of a thousand yards, and these were so marvellously placed that the crater of one cut into that of its neighbor, pulverizing everything that lived and turning the man-filled trenches into tombs. Hence there is no longer any such thing as a continuous line of trenches. Indeed, there are no longer any trenches at all, nor entanglements either, but only a series of craters. It

is these craters which the French infantry has held with such unparalleled heroism. The men holding the craters are kept supplied with food and ammunition from the chain of little forts—Vaux, Douaumont, and the others—and the forts, themselves battered almost to pieces by the torrents of steel which have been poured upon them, have relied in turn on the citadel back in Verdun for their reinforcements, their ammunition, and their provisions, all of which have had to be sent out at night, the latter on the backs of men.

So violent and long-continued have been the hurricanes of steel which have swept these slopes, that the surface of the earth has been literally blasted away, leaving a treacherous and incredibly tenacious quagmire in which horses and even soldiers have lost their lives. General Dubois told me that, only a few days before my visit to Verdun, one of his staff-officers, returning alone and afoot from an errand to Vaux, had fallen into a shell-crater and had drowned in the mud. Indeed, the

whole terrain is pitted with shell-holes as is pitted the face of a man who has had the small-pox. So terrible is the condition of the country that it often takes a soldier an hour to cover a mile. What was once a smiling and prosperous countryside has been rendered, by human agency, as barren and worthless as the slopes of Vesuvius.

Verdun, I repeat, was held not by gun-power but by man-power. It was not the monster guns on railway-trucks, or even the great numbers of quick-firing, hard-hitting 75's, but the magnificent courage and tenacity of the tired men in the mud-splashed uniforms, which held Verdun for France. Though their forts were crumbling under the violence of the German bombardment; though their trenches were pounded into pudding; though the unceasing barrage made it at times impossible to bring up food or water or reinforcements, the French hung stubbornly on, and against the granite wall of their defense the waves of men in gray flung themselves in vain. And

when the fury of the German assaults had in a measure spent itself, General Nivelle retook in a few hours, on October 24, 1916, Forts Douaumont and de Vaux, which had cost the Germans seven months of incessant efforts and a sacrifice of human lives unparalleled in history.

The fighting before Verdun illustrated and emphasized the revolution in methods of attack and defense which has taken place in the French army. At the beginning of the war the French believed in depending largely on their light artillery both to prepare and to support an attack, and for this purpose their 75's were admirably adapted. This method worked well when carried out properly, and before the Germans had time to bring up their heavy guns; it was by resorting to it that the French won the victory of the Marne. But the Marne taught the Germans that the surest way to break up the French system of attack was to interpose obstacles, such as woods, wire entanglements, and particularly trenches. To

destroy these obstacles the French then had to resort to heavy-calibered pieces, with which, as I have already remarked, they were at first very inadequately supplied. In the spring of 1915 in Artois, and in the autumn of the same year in Champagne, they attempted to break through the German lines, but these attacks were not supported by sufficient artillery and were each conducted in a single locality over a limited front. Then, at Verdun, the Germans tried opposite tactics, attempting to break through on a wide front extending on both sides of the Meuse. So appalling were their losses, however, that, as the attack progressed, they were compelled by lack of sufficient effectives to constantly narrow their front until finally the action was taking place along a line of only a few kilometres. This permitted the French to concentrate both their infantry and their artillery into dense formations, and before this concentrated and intensive fire the German attacking columns withered and were swept away like leaves before an autumn wind.

The French infantry—and the same is, I believe, true of the German—is now to all intents and purposes divided into two classes: holding troops and attacking, or "shock" troops, as the French call them. The latter consist of such picked elements as the Chasseur battalions, the Zouaves, the Colonials, the First, Twentieth, and Twenty-first Army Corps, and, of course, the Foreign Legion. All these are recruited from the youngest and most vigorous men, due regard being also paid to selecting recruits from those parts of France which have always produced the best fighting stock—and among these are the invaded districts. Shock troops are rarely sent into the trenches, but when not actively engaged in conducting or resisting an attack, are kept in cantonments well to the rear. Here they can get undisturbed rest at night, but by day they are worked as a negro teamster works his mule. As a result, they are always "on their toes," and in perfect fighting trim. In this way mobility, cohesion, and enthusiasm,

all qualities which are seriously impaired by a long stay in the trenches, are preserved in the attacking troops, who, when they go into battle, are as keen and hard and well-trained as a prize-fighter who steps into the ring to battle for the championship belt.

The most striking feature of the new French system of attack is the team-work of the infantry, artillery, and airplanes. The former advance to the assault in successive waves, each made up of several lines, the men being deployed at five-yard intervals. The first wave advances at a slow walk behind a curtain of artillery fire, which moves forward at the rate of fifty yards a minute, the first line of the wave keeping a hundred to a hundred and fifty yards, or, in other words, at a safe distance, behind this protecting fire-curtain. The men in this first line carry no rifles, but consist exclusively of grenadiers, automatic riflemen, and their ammunition carriers, every eighth man being armed with the new Chauchat automatic rifle, a recently adopted

weapon which weighs only nineteen pounds, and fires at the rate of five shots a second. Three men, carrying between them one thousand cartridges, are assigned to each of these guns, of which there are now more than fifty thousand in use on the French front. The automatic riflemen fire from the hip as they advance, keeping streams of bullets playing on the enemy just as firemen keep streams of water playing on a fire. In the second line the men are armed with rifles, some having bayonets and others rifle grenades, the latter being specially designed to break up counter-attacks against captured trenches. A third line follows, consisting of "trench cleaners," though it must not be inferred from their name that they use mops and brooms. The native African troops are generally used for this trench-cleaning business, and they do it very handily with grenades, pistols and knives.

When the first wave reaches a point within two hundred to three hundred yards of the enemy's trenches, a halt of five minutes is

made to re-form for the final charge. In addition to the advancing curtain-fire immediately preceding the troops, a second screen of fire is dropped between the enemy's first and second lines, thus preventing the men in the first line from retreating and making it equally impossible for the men in the second line to get reinforcements or supplies to their comrades in the first. Still other batteries are engaged in keeping down the fire of the hostile artillery while the big guns, mounted on railway-trucks, shell the enemy's headquarters, his supports, and his lines of communication.

The attack is accompanied by and largely directed by airplanes, certain of which are assigned to regulating the artillery fire, while others devote themselves exclusively to giving information to the infantry, with whom they communicate by means of dropping from one to six fire-balls. As the aircraft used for infantry and artillery regulation are comparatively slow machines, they are protected from the attacks of enemy aviators by a screen of

Australians on the Way to the Trenches.

Despite gas, bullets, shells, rain, mud, and cold the British soldier remains incorrigibly cheerful. He is a born optimist.

The Fire Trench.

"Figures, looking strangely mediæval in their steel helmets, crouched motionless, peering out into No Man's Land."

small, fast battle-planes—the destroyers of the air—which, in several cases, have swooped low enough to use their machine-guns on the German trenches. If it becomes necessary to give to the infantry some special information not provided for by the prearranged signals, the aviator will volplane down to within a hundred feet above the infantry and drop a written message. I was told that in one of the successful French attacks before Verdun such a message proved extremely useful as by means of it the troops advancing toward Douaumont, which was then held by the Germans, were informed that the enemy was in force on their right, but that there was practically no resistance on their left. Acting in response to this information from the skies, they swung forward on this flank, and took the Germans on their right in the rear. Just as a football team is coached from the side-lines, so a charge is nowadays directed from the clouds.

One of the picturesque developments of the

war is *camouflage,* as the French call their system of disguising or concealing batteries, airplane-sheds, ammunition stores, and the like, from observation and possible destruction by enemy aviators. This work is done in the main by a corps specially recruited for the purpose from the artists and scene painters of France. It is considered prudent, for example, to conceal the location of a certain "ammunition dump," as the British term the vast accumulations of shells, cartridges, and other supplies which are piled up at the railheads awaiting transportation to the front by motor-lorry. Over the great mound of shells and cartridge-boxes is spread an enormous piece of canvas, often larger by far than the "big top" of a four-ring circus. Then the scene painters get to work with their paints and brushes and transform that expanse of canvas into what, when viewed from the sky, appears to be, let us say, a group of innocent farm-buildings. The next day, perhaps, a German airman, circling high overhead, peers

earthward through his glasses and descries, far beneath him, a cluster of red rectangles—the tiled roofs of cottages or stables, he supposes; a patch of green—evidently a bit of lawn; a square of gray—the cobble-paved barnyard—and pays it no further attention. How can he know that what he takes to be a farmstead is but a piece of painted canvas concealing a small mountain of potential death?

At a certain very important point on the French front there long stood, in an exposed and commanding position, a large and solitary tree, or rather the trunk of a tree, for it had been shorn of its branches by shell-fire. A landmark in that flat and devastated region, every detail of this gaunt sentinel had long since become familiar to the keen eyed observers in the German trenches, a few hundred yards away. Were a man to climb to its top—and live—he would be able to command a comprehensive view of the surrounding terrain. The German sharpshooters saw to it, however, that no one climbed it. But one day the re-

sourceful French took the measurements of that tree and photographed it. These measurements and photographs were sent to Paris. A few weeks later there arrived at the French front by railway an imitation tree, made of steel, which was an exact duplicate in every respect, even to the splintered branches and the bark, of the original. Under cover of darkness the real tree was cut down and the fake tree erected in its place, so that, when daylight came, there was no change in the landscape to arouse the Germans' suspicions. The lone tree-trunk to which they had grown so accustomed still reared itself skyward. But the "tree" at which the Germans were now looking was of hollow steel, and concealed in its interior in a sort of conning-tower, forty feet above the ground, a French observing officer, field-glasses at his eyes and a telephone at his lips, was peering through a cleverly concealed peep-hole, spotting the bursts of the French shells and regulating the fire of the French batteries.

Nearly three years have passed since Germany tore up the Scrap of Paper. In that time the French army has been hammered and tempered and tested until it has become the most formidable weapon of offense and defense in existence. I am convinced that in organization and in efficiency it is now, after close on three years of experiments and object-lessons, as good, if not better, than the German—and I have marched with both and have seen both in action. Its light artillery is admittedly the finest in the world. Though without any heavy artillery to speak of at the beginning of the war, it has in this respect already equalled if not surpassed the Germans. It has created an air service which, in efficiency and in number of machines, is unequalled. And the men, themselves, in addition to their characteristic *élan,* possess that invaluable quality which the German soldier lacks—initiative.

It is worthy of note, in this connection, that the entire reorganization of the French army

has been carried out virtually without any action on the part of the French Congress, and with merely the formal approval of the Minister of War. The politicians in Paris have, save in a few instances, wisely refrained from interference, and have left military problems to be decided by military men. But, when all is said and done, it will not be the generals who will decide this war; it will be the soldiers. And they are truly wonderful men, these French soldiers. It is their amazing calm, their total freedom from nervousness or apprehension, that impresses one the most, and the secret of this calm is confidence. They are as confident of eventual victory as they are that the sun will rise to-morrow morning. They are fanatics, and France is their Allah. You can't beat men like that, because they never know when they are beaten, and keep on fighting.

I like to think that sometimes, in that cold and dismal hour before the dawn, when hope and courage are at their lowest ebb, there ap-

pears among the worn and homesick soldiers in the trenches the spirit of the Great Emperor. Cheeringly he claps each man upon the shoulder.

"Courage, mon brave," he whispers. "On les aura!"

VII

"THAT CONTEMPTIBLE LITTLE ARMY"

IN watching the operations on the British front I have always had the feeling that I was witnessing a gigantic engineering undertaking. The amazing network of rails which the British have thrown over Northern France, the endless strings of lorries, the warehouses bulging with supplies, the cranes and derricks, the repair depots, the machine-shops, the tens of thousands of men whose only weapons are the shovel and the pick, all help to further this impression. And, when you stop to think about it, it *is* an engineering undertaking. These muddy men in khaki are engaged in checking and draining off an unclean flood which, were it not for them, would soon inundate all Europe. And so, because I love things that are clean and green and beautiful,

I am very grateful to them for their work of sanitation.

Because most of the despatches from the British front have related to trenches and tanks and howitzers and flying men and raiding-parties, the attention of the American people has been diverted from the remarkable and tremendously important work which is being played by the army behind the army. Yet one of the most splendid achievements of the entire war is the creation of the great organization which links the British trenches with the British Isles. In failing to take into account the Anglo-Saxon's genius for rapid organization and improvization in emergencies, Germany made a fatal error. She had spent upward of forty years in perfecting her war machine; the British have built a better one in less than three. I said in *"Vive la France!"* if I remember rightly, that the British machine, though still somewhat wabbly and creaky in its joints, was, I believed, eventually going to do the business for which it

was designed. That was a year ago. It has already shown in unmistakable fashion that it can do the business and do it well, and it is, moreover, just entering on the period of its greatest efficiency.

In order to understand the workings and the ramifications of this great machine in France (its work in England is another story) you must begin your study of it at the base camps which the British have established at Calais, Havre, Boulogne, and Rouen, and the training-schools at Etaples and elsewhere. Let us take, for example, "Cinder City," as the base camp outside Calais is called because the ground on which it stands was made by dumping ships' cinders into a marsh. It is in many respects one of the most remarkable cities in the world. Its population, which fluctuates with the tide of war, averages, I suppose, about one hundred thousand. It has many miles of macadamized streets (as sandy locations are chosen for these base camps, mud is almost unknown) lined with storehouses—

one of them the largest in the world—with stores, with machine-shops, churches, restaurant, club-rooms, libraries, Y. M. C. A.'s—there are over a thousand of them in the war zone—Salvation Army barracks, schools, bathing establishments, theatres, motion-picture houses, hospitals for men and hospitals for horses, and thousands upon thousands of portable wooden huts. This city is lighted by electricity, it has highly efficient police, fire, and street-cleaning departments, and its water and sewage systems would make jealous many municipalities of twice its size. Among its novel features is a school for army bakers and another for army cooks, for good food has almost as much to do with winning battles as good ammunition. But most significant and important of all are the "economy shops" where are repaired or manufactured practically everything required by an army. War, as the British have found, is a staggeringly expensive business, and, in order that there may be a minimum of wastage, they have or-

ganized a Salvage Corps whose business it is to sort the litter of the battle-fields and to send everything that can by any possibility be re-utilized to the "economy shops" at the rear. In one of these shops I saw upward of a thousand French and Belgian women renovating clothing that had come back from the front, uniforms which arrived as bundles of muddy, bloody rags being fumigated and cleaned and mended and pressed until they were almost as good as new. Tens of thousands of boots are sent in to be repaired; those that can stand the operation are soled and heeled by American machines brought over for the purpose, and even the others are not wasted, for their tops are converted into boot-laces. In one shop the worn-out tubes and springs of guns are replaced with new ones. (Did you know that during an intense bombardment the springs of the guns will last only two days?) In another fragments of valuable metal sent in from the battle-field are melted and reused. (Perhaps you were not aware that a 5-inch shell carries

a copper band weighing a pound and a quarter. The weight of copper shot off in this way during a single brief bombardment was four hundred tons.) The millions of empty shells which litter the ground behind the batteries are cleaned and classified and shipped over to England to be reloaded. Steel rails which the retreating Germans believed they had made quite useless are here straightened out and used over again. Shattered rifles, bits of harness, haversacks, machine-gun belts, trench helmets, sand-bags, barbed wire—nothing escapes the Salvage Corps. They even collect and send in old rags, which are sold for two hundred and fifty dollars a ton. Let us talk less hereafter of *German* efficiency.

Even more significant than the base camps of the efficiency and painstaking thoroughness of the British war-machine are the training camps scattered behind the lines. Typical of these is the great camp at Etaples, on the French coast, where 150,000 men can be trained at a time. These are not schools for

raw recruits, mind you—that work is done in England—but "finishing schools," as it were, where men who are supposed to have already learned the business of war are given final examinations in the various subjects in which they have received instruction before being sent up to the front. And the soldier who is unable to pass these final tests does not go to the front until he can. The camp at Etaples, which is built on a stretch of rolling sand beside the sea, is five miles long and a mile wide, and on every acre of it there are squads of soldiers drilling, drilling, drilling. Here a gymnastic instructor from Sandhurst, lithe and active as a panther, is teaching a class of sergeants drawn from many regiments how to become instructors themselves. His language would have amazed and delighted Kipling's Ortheris and Mulvaney; I could have listened to him all day. Over there a platoon of Highlanders are practising the taking of German trenches. At the blast of a whistle they clamber out of a length of trench built for the pur-

pose, and, with shrill Gaelic yells, go swarming across a stretch of broken ground, through a tangle of twisted wire, and over the top of the German parapet, whereupon a row of German soldiers, stuffed with straw and automatically controlled, spring up to meet them. If a man fails to bury his bayonet in the "German" who opposes him, he is sent back to the awkward squad and spends a few days lunging at a dummy swung from a beam.

Crater fighting is taught in an ingenious reproduction of a crater, by an officer who has had much experience with the real thing and who explains to his pupils, whose knowledge of craters has been gained from the pictures in the illustrated weeklies, how to capture, fortify, and hold such a position. In order to give the men confidence when the order "Put on gas-masks!" is passed down the line, they are sent into a real dugout filled with real gas and the entrances closed behind them. As soon as they find that the masks are a sure protection, their nervousness disappears. In

order to accustom them to lachrymal shells, they are marched, this time without masks, through an underground chamber which reeks with the tear-producing gas—and they are a very weepy, red-eyed lot of men who emerge. They are instructed in trench-digging, in the construction of wire entanglements, "knife-rests," chevaux-de-frise, and every other form of obstruction, in revetting, in the making of fascines and gabions, in sapping and mining, in the most approved methods of dugout construction, in trench sanitation, in the location of listening-posts and how to conceal them; they are shown how to cut wire, they are drilled in trench raiding and in the most effective methods of "trench cleaning." The practical work is supplemented by lectures on innumerable subjects. As it is extremely difficult for an officer to make his explanations heard by a battalion of men assembled in the open, a series of small amphitheatres have been excavated from the sand-dunes, the tiers of seats being built up of petrol tins filled with

sand. In one of these improvised amphitheatres I saw an officer illustrating the proper method of using the gas-mask to a class of 600 men.

On these imitation battle-fields, any one of which is larger than the field of Waterloo, the men are instructed in the gentle art of bombing, first with "dubs," which do not explode at all, then with toy-grenades which go off harmlessly with a noise like a small firecracker, and finally, when they have become sufficiently expert, with the real Mills bomb, which scatters destruction in a burst of noise and flame. To attain accuracy and distance in throwing these destructive little ovals is by no means as easy as it sounds. The bombing-school at Etaples will not soon forget the American baseball player who threw a bomb seventy yards. The hand-grenade is the unsafest and most treacherous of all weapons and even in practice accidents and near-accidents frequently occur. The Mills bomb, which has a scored surface to prevent slipping,

is about the shape and size of a large lemon. Protruding from one end is the small metal ring of the firing-pin. Three seconds after this is pulled out the bomb explodes—and the farther the thrower can remove himself from the bomb in that time the better. Now, in line with the policy of strict economy which has been adopted by the British military authorities, the men receiving instruction at the bombing-schools were told not to throw away the firing-pins, but to put them in their pockets, to be turned in and used over again. The day after this order went into effect a company of newly arrived recruits were being put through their bomb-throwing tests. Man after man walked up to the protecting earthwork, jerked loose the firing-pin, hurled the bomb, and put the firing-pin in his pocket. At last it came the turn of a youngster who was obviously overcome with stage fright. To the horror of his comrades, he threw the firing-pin and put the live bomb in his pocket! In three seconds that bomb was due to explode, but the in-

structor, who had seen what had happened, made a flying leap to the befuddled man, thrust his hand into his pocket, drew out the bomb, and hurled it. It exploded in the air.

Near Etaples, at Paris Plage, is the largest of the British machine-gun schools. Here the men are taught the operation not only of all the models of machine-guns used by the Allies, but they are also shown how to handle any which they may capture from the Germans. Set up on the beach were a dozen different models, beginning with a wonderfully ingenious weapon, as beautifully constructed as a watch, which had just been brought in from a captured German airplane and of which the British officers were loud in their admiration, and ending with the little twenty-five-pound gun invented by Colonel Lewis, an American. Standing on the sands, a few hundred yards away, were half a dozen targets of the size and outline of German soldiers. "Try 'em out," suggested the officer in command of the school. So I seated myself behind the German gun,

looked into a ground-glass finder like that on a newspaper photographer's camera, swung the barrel of the weapon until the intersection of the scarlet cross-hairs covered the mirrored reflection of the distant figures, and pressed together a pair of handles. There was a noise such as a small boy makes when he draws a stick along the palings of a picket fence, a series of flame-jets leaped from the muzzle of the gun, and the targets disappeared. "You'd have broken up that charge," commented the officer approvingly. "Try the others." So I tried them all—Maxim, Hotchkiss, Colt, St. Etienne, Lewis—in turn.

"Which do you consider the best gun?" I asked.

"That one," and he pointed to Colonel Lewis's invention. "It is the lightest, simplest, strongest, and most effective machine-gun made. It weighs only twenty-five and a half pounds and a clip of forty-seven rounds can be fired in four seconds. At present we have four to each company—though the num-

ber will probably be increased shortly—and they are so easy to handle that in an attack they go over with the second wave."

"But our Ordnance Department claims that they cannot fire two thousand rounds without heating and jamming," I remarked.

"Who ever heard of a machine-gun being called upon to fire two thousand rounds under actual service conditions?" he asked scornfully. "On the front we rarely exceed two hundred or three hundred rounds; five hundred never. Long before that number can be fired the attack is broken up or the gun is captured."

"In any event," said I, "the American War Department, to whom Colonel Lewis offered his patents, asserts that the gun did not make good on the proving-grounds of Flanders."

"Well," was the dry response, "it has made good on the proving-grounds of Flanders.

The pretty little casino at Paris Plage, where, in the days before the war, the members of the summer colony used to dance or play at *petits chevaux,* has been converted

into a lecture-hall for machine-gunners. Covering the walls are charts and cleverly painted pictures which illustrate at a glance the important rôles played by machine-guns in certain actions. They reminded me of those charts which they use in Sunday-schools to explain the flight of the Israelites out of Egypt or their wanderings in the Wilderness. Seated on the wooden benches, which have been brought in from a school near by, are a score or more of sun-reddened young Englishmen in khaki.

"Here," says the alert young officer who is acting as instructor, unrolling a chart, "is a picture of an action in a little village south of Mons. A company of our fellows were holding the village. There are, you see, only two roads by which the Germans could advance, so the captain who was in command placed machine-guns so as to command each of them. About five o'clock in the morning the Germans appeared on this lower road. Now, the sergeant in charge of that machine-gun, in-

stead of taking cover behind this hedge with this brook in front of him, had concealed his gun in this clump of trees, which, as you see, are out in the middle of a field. No sooner had he opened upon the Boches, therefore, than a detachment of Uhlans galloped around and cut him off from the town. Then it was all over but the shouting. The Germans got into the town and our fellows got it in the neck. And all because that fool sergeant didn't use common sense in choosing a position for his gun. They marked his grave with a nice little white cross. And that's what you boys will get if you don't profit by these things I'm telling you."

There you have an example of the thorough preparation which is necessary to wage modern war successfully. It is not merely a matter of a man being taught how to operate a machine-gun; if he is to be of the greatest value he must be taught how to place that gun where it is going to do the maximum damage to the enemy. And, by means of the graphic

Sunday-school charts, and the still more graphic sentences of the officer-teacher, those lessons are so driven home that the men will never forget them.

Virtually everything between England and the fighting front is under the control of the L. C.—Lines of Communication. This vast organization, one of the most wide-spread and complex in the world, represents six per cent of all the British forces in France. Of the countless forms of activity which it comprises, the railways are by far the most important. Did you know that the British have laid and are operating more than a thousand miles of new railway in France? As the existing railways were wholly inadequate for the transportation of the millions of fighting men, with the stupendous quantities of food and equipment, new networks of steel had to be laid, single tracks had to be converted into double ones, mammoth railway-yards, sidings, and freight-houses had to be built, thousands of locomotives, carriages, and trucks provided. This

work was done by the Railway Companies of the Royal Engineers, behind which was the Railway Reserve, whose members, before the war, were employed by the great English railway systems. Wearing the blue-and-white brassard of the L. C. are whole battalions of engineers and firemen, bridge-builders, signalmen, freight handlers, clerks, and navvies, all of them experts at their particular jobs. It is impossible to overrate the services which these railway men have performed. They build and staff the new lines which are constantly being constructed; they repair destroyed sections of track, restore blown-up bridges; in short, keep in order the arteries through which courses the life-blood of the army. They are the real organizers of victory. Without them the men in the trenches could not fight a day. You cannot travel for a mile along the British front without seeing an example of their rapid track-laying. They have had to forget all the old-fashioned British notions about track permanency, however, for their business is to get the

trains over the rails with the least possible delay; nothing else matters. Engaged in this work are men who have learned the lessons of rough-and-ready construction on the Mexican Central, on the Egyptian State Railways, on the Beira and Mashonaland, and on the Canadian Pacific, and the rate at which they cause the twin lines of steel to grow before one's eyes would have aroused the admiration of such railroad pioneers as Stanford and Hill and Harriman.

The engines for use on these military railways are sent across the Channel with fires already built and banked, water in the boilers, and coal in the tenders. They come in ships specially constructed so that the whole top deck can be lifted off. Giant cranes reach down into the hold and pick the engines up and set them down on the tracks on the quays, the crews climb aboard and shake down the fires, a harassed-looking man, known as the M. L. O. (Military Landing Officer) turns them over to the Railway Transport Officer,

who is a very important personage indeed, and he in turn hands the engineers their orders, and, half an hour after they have been landed on the soil of France, the engines go puffing off to take their places in the war machine.

It is not the numbers of men to be transported to the front, nor even the astounding quantities of supplies required to feed those men, which have been the primary cause for crisscrossing all Northern France with this latticework of steel. It is the unappeasable appetite of the guns. "This is a cannon war," Field-Marshal von Mackensen told an interviewer. "The side that burns up the most ammunition is bound to gain ground." And on that assumption the British are proceeding. England's response to the insistent cry of "Shells, shells, shells!" has been one of the wonders of the war. By January 1, 1917, the shell increase for howitzers was twenty-seven times greater than in 1914-15; in mid-caliber shells the increase was thirty-four times; and in all the "heavies" ninety-four times. And

the shell output keeps a-growing and a-growing. Yet what avail the four thousand flaming forges which have made all this possible, what avails the British sea-power which has landed these amazing quantities of shells in France, and 2,000,000 of men along with them, if the shells cannot be delivered to the guns? And that is where the great new systems of railway have come in.

"Be lavish with your ammunition," Napoleon urged upon his battery commanders. "Fire incessantly." And it is that maxim which the artillerists of all the nations at war are following to-day. The expenditure of shells staggers the imagination. In a single day, near Arras, the French let loose upon the German lines $1,625,000 worth of projectiles, or almost as great a quantity as Germany used in the entire war of 1870-71. Five million shells of all calibers were fired by the British gunners during the first four weeks of the offensive on the Somme. In one week's attack north of Verdun the Germans fired

2,400,000 field-gun shells and 600,000 larger ones. To transport this mountain of potential destruction required 240 trains, each carrying 200 tons of projectiles.

During the "Big Push" on the Somme, there were frequently eighty guns on a front of two hundred yards. The batteries would fire a round per gun per minute for days on end, the gunners working in shifts, two hours on and two hours off. So thickly did the shells fall upon the German lines that the British observing officers were frequently unable to spot their own bursts. A field-battery of eighteen-pounders firing at this rate will blaze away anywhere from twelve to twenty tons of ammunition a day. As guns firing with such rapidity wear out their tubes and their springs in a few days, it is necessary to rush entire batteries to the repair-shops at the rear. And that provides another burden for the railways.

In addition to the railways of standard gauge, the British have laid down an astonishing trackage of narrow-gauge, Décauville, and

monorail systems. These portable and easily laid field railways twist and turn and coil like snakes among the gun positions, the miniature engines, with their strings of toy cars, puffing their way into the heart of the artillery zone, where the ammunition is unloaded, sorted, and classified in calibers, and then artfully hidden from the prying eyes of enemy aviators and from their bombs. These great collections of gun-food the English inelegantly term "ammunition dumps." Nor do the trains that come up loaded go back empty, for upon the miniature trucks are loaded the combings of the battle-field to be shipped back to the "economy shops" in the rear. Where possible, wounded men are sent back to the hospitals in like fashion, some of the railways having trucks specially constructed for this purpose. Where the light railways stop the monorail systems begin, food, cartridges, and mail being sent right up into the forward trenches in small cars or baskets suspended from a single overhead rail and pushed by hand. They look

not unlike the old-fashioned cash-and-parcel carriers which were used in American department stores before the present system of pneumatic tubes came in.

Comprising another branch of the L. C.'s multifarious activities are the field telephones, whose lines of black-and-white poles run out across the landscape in every direction. And it is no haphazard and hastily improvised system either, but as good in every respect as you will find in American cities. It has to be good. Too much depends upon it. An indistinct message might cost a thousand lives; a breakdown in the system might mean a great military disaster. Every officer of importance in the British zone has a telephone at hand, and as the armies advance the telephones go with them, the wires and portable instruments being transported by the motor-cycle despatch riders of the Army Signal Corps, so that frequently within thirty minutes after a battalion has captured a German position its commander will be in telephonic communication

with Advanced G. H. Q. The speed with which the connections are made would be remarkable even in New York. I have seen an officer at General Headquarters establish communication with the Provost Marshal's office in Paris in three minutes, and with the War Office in London in ten.

I might mention in passing that nowadays the General Headquarters of an army (G. H. Q. it is always called on the British front, Grand Quartier-Général on the French, and Comando Supremo on the Italian) is usually eight, ten, fifteen, sometimes twenty-five miles behind the firing-line. Most of the commanding generals have, however, advanced headquarters, considerably nearer the front, where they usually remain during important actions. It is said that at Waterloo Napoleon and Wellington watched each other through their telescopes. Compare this with the battle for Verdun, where the headquarters of the Crown Prince must have been at least thirty miles from those of General Nivelle at Souilly.

If one of the greatest triumphs of the war is the creation of the transport system, another is the maintenance, often under heavy shell-fire, of the highways on which that transport moves. No one can imagine what the traffic from the Channel up to the British front is like; one must see it to believe it. The roads are as crowded with traffic as is Fifth Avenue on a sunny afternoon. Every fifty yards or so are military police, mounted and afoot, who control the traffic with small red flags as do the New York bluecoats with their stop-and-go signs. So incredibly dense was the volume of traffic during the Somme offensive that it is little exaggeration to say that an active man could have started immediately back of the British front and could have made his way to Albert, twenty miles distant, if not, indeed, to the English Channel, by jumping from lorry to wagon, from wagon to ambulance, from ambulance to motor-bus. In going from Albert up to the front I passed hundreds, yes, thousands of lumbering motor-lorries bearing every

kind of supply from barbed wire to marmalade. In order to avoid confusion, the lorries belonging to the ammunition-train have painted on their sides a shell, while those comprising the supply column are designated by a four-leaf clover. A whole series of other distinctive emblems, such as stars, crescents, pyramids, Maltese crosses, unicorns, make it possible to tell at a glance to what division or unit a vehicle belongs. I passed six-mule teams from Missouri and Mississippi hauling wagons made in South Bend, Indiana, which were piled high with sides of Australian beef and loaves of French-made bread. Converted motor-buses, which had once borne the signs Bank-Holborn-Marble Arch, rumbled past with their loads of boisterous men in khaki bound for the trenches or bringing back other loads of tired men clad apparently in nothing save mud. Endless strings of ambulances went rocking and rolling by and some of them were dripping crimson. Tractors, big as elephants, panted and grunted on their way,

hauling long trains of wagons laden with tins of cocoa or condensed milk, with kegs of nails, with lumber, with fodder. Occasionally a gray staff-car like our own threaded its tortuous and halting way through the terrific press of traffic. We passed one that had broken down. The two officers who were its occupants were seated on the muddy bank beside the road smoking cigarettes while the driver was endeavoring to get his motor started again. One of them, on the shoulder-straps of whose "British warm" were the stars of a captain, was a slender, fair-haired, rather delicate-looking youngster in the early twenties. It was the Prince of Wales, but, so far as receiving any attention from the hurrying throng was concerned, he might as well have been an unknown subaltern. For it is an extremely democratic army, and royalty receives from it scant consideration; Lloyd George is of far more importance than King George to the man in khaki.

Almost since the beginning of the war this

particular stretch of road on which I was travelling had been shelled persistently, as was shown by the splintered tree-stumps which lined the road and the shell-craters which pitted the fields on either side. To keep this road passable under such wear and tear as it had been subjected to for many months would have been a remarkable accomplishment under any circumstances; to keep it open under heavy shell-fire is a performance for which the labor battalions deserve the highest praise. Wearing their steel helmets, the road-making gangs have kept at work, night and day, along its entire length, exposed to much of the danger of the men in the trenches, and having none of their protection. There has been no time to obtain ordinary road metal, so they have filled up the holes with bricks taken from the ruined villages which dot the landscape, rolling them level when they get the chance. For nothing must be permitted to interfere with that flow of traffic; on it depends the food for the men and for the guns. An hour's

blockade on that road would prove infinitely more serious than would a freight wreck which blocked all four tracks of the New York Central. No wonder that Lord Derby, in addressing his Pioneer Battalions in Lancashire, remarked: "In this war the pick and the shovel are as important as the rifle."

While I was standing on the summit of a little eminence beyond Fricourt, looking down on that amazing scene of industry, a big German shell burst squarely on the road. It wrecked a motor-lorry, it killed several horses and half a dozen men, but, most serious of all, it blew in the road a hole as large as a cottage cellar. The river of traffic may have halted for two or three minutes, certainly not more. In scarcely more time than it takes to tell it, the nearest military police were on the spot. The stream of vehicles bound for the front was swung out into the fields at the right, the stream headed for the rear was diverted into the fields at the left. Within five minutes a hundred men were at work with pick and

shovel filling up the hole with material piled at frequent intervals along the road for just that purpose. Within twenty minutes a steam-roller had arrived — goodness knows where it had materialized from!—and was at work rolling the road into hardness. Within thirty minutes after the shell burst the hole which it made no longer existed and the lorries, the tractors, the wagons, the guns, the buses, the ambulances were rolling on their way. Then they bore away the six tarpaulin-covered forms beside the road and buried them.

The weather is a vital factor in war. The heavy rains of a French winter quickly transform the ground, already churned up by months of shell-fire, into a slimy, glutinous swamp, incredibly tenacious and unbelievably deep. Through this vast stretch of mud, pitted everywhere with shell-holes filled with stagnant water, the infantry has to make its way and the guns have to be moved forward to support the infantry. On one stretch of road,

only a quarter of a mile long, on the Somme, twelve horses sank so deeply in the mud that it was impossible to extricate them and they had to be shot. No wonder that the soldiers, going up to the trenches, prefer to leave their overcoats and blankets behind and face the misery of wet and cold rather than be burdened with the additional weight while struggling through the molasses-like mire. The only thing that they take up to the trenches which could by any stretch of the imagination be described as a comfort is whale-oil, carried in great jars, with which they rub their feet several times daily in order to prevent "trench feet." If you want to get a real idea of what the British infantryman has to endure during at least six months of the year, I would suggest that you strap on a pack-basket with a load of forty-two pounds, which is the weight of the British field equipment, tramp for ten hours through a ploughed field after a heavy rain, jump in a canal, and, without removing

your clothes or boots, spend the night on a manure-pile in a barnyard. Then you will understand why soldiers become so heedless of gas, bullets, and shells. But with it all the British soldier remains incorrigibly cheerful. He is a born optimist and he shows it in his songs. Away back in the early months of the war he went into action to the lilt of *"Tipperary."* The gloom and depression of that first terrible winter induced in him a more serious mood, to which he gave vent in *"Onward, Christian Soldiers."* But now he feels that victory, though still far off, is certain, and he puts his confidence into words: *"Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag and Smile, Smile, Smile," "Keep the Home Fires Burning," "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,"* and *"Hallelujah! I'm a Hobo!"* The latter very popular. Then there was another, adapted by the Salvation Army from an old music-hall tune, which I heard a battalion chanting lustily as it went slush-slushing up to the firing-line. It ran something like this:

"The Bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me.
For me the angels sing-a-ling-a-ling,
They've got the goods for me.
O Death, where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling,
O Grave thy victoree?
The Bells of Hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling
For you but not for me!"

It is almost impossible to make oneself believe that, less than two years ago, these iron-hard, sun-bronzed, determined-looking men were keeping books, tending shop, waiting on table, driving wagons, and doing all the other humdrum things which make up the working lives of most of us. Yet this citizen army is winning sensational successes against the best trained troops in the world, occupying positions of their own choosing, fortified and defended with every device that human ingenuity and years of experience have been able to suggest. These ex-shopkeepers, ex-tailors, ex-lawyers, ex-farmers, ex-cabmen are accomplishing what most military authorities asserted was impossible: they are driving Ger-

man veterans out of trenches amply supported by artillery—and they are doing the job cheerfully and extremely well.

I believe that one of the reasons why the *morale* of the British is so high is because, instead of adopting the dugout life of the Germans, they have in the main kept to the open. Trench life is anything but pleasant, yet it is infinitely more conducive to confidence, courage, and enthusiasm than the rat-like existence of the Germans in foul-smelling, ill-lighted, unsanitary burrows far beneath the surface of the ground. Few men can remain for month after month in such a place and retain their optimism and their self-respect. One of the German dugouts which I saw on the Somme was so deep in the earth that it had two hundred steps. The Germans who were found in it admitted quite frankly that after enjoying for several weeks or months the safety which it afforded, they had no stomach for going back to the trenches. They were only too glad to crawl into their hole when the British bar-

A British "Heavy" Mounted on a Railway-Truck Shelling the German Lines.

During a big offensive the guns frequently fire a round a minute for days on end, the gunners working in shifts, two hours on and two hours off.

Buried on the Field of Honor.

"Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return."

rage began and there they were trapped and surrendered.

Germany largely based her confidence of victory on the belief that, under the strain of war, the far-flung British Empire, with its heterogeneous elements and racial jealousies, would promptly crumble. It was a vital error. Instead of crumbling it hardened into a unity which is adamantine. Canada has already contributed half a million men to the British armies, Australia three hundred thousand. South Africa, by undertaking her own defense, released the imperial regiments stationed there. She not only suppressed the German-fomented rebellion, but she conquered German Southwest Africa and German East Africa, thus adding nearly a sixth of the Dark Continent to the Empire, and has sent ten thousand men to the battle-fields of Europe. Indian troops are fighting in France, in Macedonia, in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, and in Egypt. From the West Indies have come twelve thousand men. The Malay States

gave to the Empire a battleship and a battalion. A little island in the Mediterranean raised the King's Own Malta Regiment. Uganda and Nyassaland raised and supported the King's African Rifles — five thousand strong. The British colonies on the other seaboard of the continent increased the West African Field Force to seven thousand men. The fishermen and lumbermen from Newfoundland won imperishable glory on the Somme. From the coral atolls of the Fijis hastened six score volunteers. The Falkland Islands, south of South America, raised 140 men. From the Yukon, Sarawak, Wei-hai-wei, the Seychelles, Hong-Kong, Belize, Saskatchewan, Aden, Tasmania, British Guiana, Sierra Leone, St. Helena, the Gold Coast, poured Europeward, at the summons of the Motherland, an endless stream of fighting men.

Scattered in trenches and tents, in barracks and billets over the whole of Northern France are men hailing from the uttermost parts of

the earth. Some there are who have spent their lives searching for gold by the light of the Aurora Borealis and others who have delved for diamonds on the South African veldt. Some have ridden range on the plains of Texas and others on the plains of Queensland. When, in the recreation huts, the phonograph plays *"Home, Sweet Home"* the thoughts of some drift to nipa-thatched huts on flaming tropic islands, some think of tin-roofed wooden cottages in the environs of Sydney or Melbourne, others of staid, old-fashioned, red-brick houses in Halifax or Quebec.

Serving as a connecting-link between the British and the French and Belgian armies is a corps of interpreters known as the *liaison.* As there are well over two million Englishmen in France, a very small percentage of whom have any knowledge of French, the *liaison* enjoys no sinecure. To assist in the billeting of British battalions in French villages, to conduct negotiations with the canny

countryfolk for food and fodder, to mollify angry housewives whose ménages have been upset by boisterous Tommies billeted upon them, to translate messages of every description, to interrogate peasants suspected of espionage—these are only a few of the duties which the *liaison* officers are called upon to perform. The corps is recruited from Englishmen who have been engaged in business in Paris, habitués of the Riviera, students of the Latin Quarter, French hairdressers, head waiters, and ladies' tailors who have learned English "as she is spoke" in London's West End. The officers of the *liaison* can be readily distinguished by their caps, which resemble those worn by railroad brakemen, and by the gilt sphinx on the collars of their drab uniforms. This emblem was chosen by Napoleon as a badge for the corps of interpreters he organized during his Egyptian campaign, but the British unkindly assert it was selected for the *liaison* officers because nobody can understand them.

The more I see of the war the more I am impressed with its utter impersonality. It is a highly organized business, conducted by specialists, and into it personalities and picturesqueness seldom enter. One hears the noise and the clamor, of course; one sees the virility, the intense activity, the feverish haste, yet at the same time one realizes how little the human element counts; all is machinery and mathematics. I remember that one day I was lunching in his dugout with an officer commanding a battery of heavy howitzers. Just as my host was serving the tinned peaches the telephone-bell jangled. It was an observation officer, up near the firing-line, reporting that through his telescope he had spotted a German ammunition column passing through a certain ruined hamlet three or four miles away. On his map the battery commander showed me a small square, probably not more than three or four acres in extent, on which, in order to "get" that ammunition column, his shells must fall. Some rapid calculations on a pad of paper,

and, calling in his subordinate, he handed him the "arithmetic." A minute or two later, from a clump of trees close by, there came in rapid succession four splitting crashes and four invisible express-trains went screeching toward the German lines to explode, with the roar that scatters death, on a spot as far away and as invisible from me as Washington Square is from Grant's Tomb. Before the echo of the guns had died away my host was back to his tinned peaches again. Neither he, nor any of his gunners, knew, or ever would know, or, indeed, very greatly cared, what destruction those shells had wrought. That's what I mean by the impersonality of modern war.

Our car stopped with startling abruptness in response to the upraised hand of a giant in khaki whose high-crowned sombrero and the brass letters on his shoulder-straps showed that he was a trooper of the Alberta Horse. On his arm was a red brassard bearing the magic letters M. P.—Military Police.

"Better not go any farther, sir," he said, addressing the staff-officer who was my companion. "The Boches are shelling the road just ahead pretty heavily this morning. They got a lorry a few minutes ago and I've had orders to stop traffic until things quiet down a bit."

"I'm afraid we'll have to take to the mud," said my cicerone resignedly. "And after last night's rain it will be beastly going.

"And don't forget your helmet and gas-mask," he called, as I stepped from the car into a foot of oozy mire.

"Will we need them?" I asked, for the inverted wash-basin which the British dignify by the name of helmet is the most uncomfortable form of headgear ever devised by man.

"It's orders," he answered. "No one is supposed to go into the trenches without mask and helmet. And there's never any telling when we may need them. No use in taking chances."

Taking off my leather coat, which was too

heavy for walking, I attempted to toss it into the car, but the wind caught it and carried it into the mud, in which it disappeared as quickly and completely as though I had dropped it in a lake. Leaving the comparative hardness of the road, we started to make our way to the mouth of a communication trench through what had evidently once been a field of sugar-beets—and instantly sank to our knees in mire that seemed to be a mixture of molasses, glue, and porridge. It seemed as though some subterranean monster had seized my feet with its tentacles and was trying to drag me down. It was perhaps half a mile to the communication trench and it took us half an hour of the hardest walking I have ever had to reach it. It had walls of slippery clay and a corduroyed bottom, but the corduroy was hidden beneath the mud left by thousands of feet. Telephone-wires, differentiated by tags of colored tape, ran down the sides. Shortly we came upon a working party of Highlanders who were repairing the trench-wall. The wars of the

Middle Ages could have seen no more strangely costumed fighting men. Above their half-puttees showed the brilliantly plaided tops of their stockings. Their kilts of green and blue tartan were protected by khaki aprons. Each man wore one of the recently issued jerkins, a sleeveless and shapeless coat of rough-tanned sheepskin such as was probably worn, in centuries past, by the English bowmen. On their heads were the "tin pot" helmets such as we were wearing, and in leather cases at their belts they carried broad-bladed and extremely vicious-looking knives.

For nearly an hour we slipped and stumbled through the endless cutting. At one spot the parapet, soaked by water, had caved in. In the breach thus made had been planted a neatly lettered sign. It was terse and to the point: "The Hun sees you here. Go away." And we did. The trench had gradually been growing narrower and shallower and more tortuous until we were walking half doubled over so as not to show our heads above the

top. At last it came to an end in a sort of cellar, perhaps six feet square, which had been burrowed from the ridge of a hill. The entrance to the observatory, for that is what it was, had been carefully screened by a burlap curtain; within, a telescope, mounted on a tripod, applied its large and inquisitive eye to a small aperture, likewise curtained, cut in the opposite wall. We were in the advanced observation post on the slopes of Notre Dame de Lorette, less than a thousand yards from the enemy. At the foot of the spur on which we stood ran the British trenches and, a few hundred yards beyond them, the German. From our vantage-point we could see the two lines, looking like monstrous brown snakes, extending for miles across the plain. Perhaps a mile behind the German trenches was a patch of red-brown roofs. It was the town of Lieven, a straggling suburb of Lens, famous as the centre of the mine-fields of Northern France.

The only occupants of the observation post were a youthful Canadian lieutenant and a

sergeant of the "Buzzers," as they call the Signal Corps. The officer was from Montreal and he instantly became my friend when I spoke of golf at Dixie and rides in the woods back of Mount Royal and a certain cocktail which they make with great perfection in a certain club that we both knew. He adjusted the telescope and I put my eye to it, whereupon the streets of the distant town sprang into life before me. In front of a cottage a woman was hanging out washing—I could even make out the colors of the garments; a gray motor whirled into a square, stopped, a man alighted, and it went on again; a group of men—German soldiers doubtless—strolled across my field of vision and one of them paused for a moment as though to light a pipe; along a street straggled a line of children, evidently coming from school, for it must be remembered that in most of these French towns occupied by the Germans, even those close behind the lines, the civilian life goes on much as usual. Though the Allies could blow these

towns off the map if they wished, they do not bombard them save for some specific object, as to do so would be to kill many of their own people. Nor does it pay to waste ammunition on individual enemies. But if an observation officer sees enough Germans in a group to make the expenditure of ammunition worth while, he will telephone to one of the batteries and a well-placed shell tells the Germans that street gatherings are strictly *verboten.*

"Sorry that you weren't here yesterday," the lieutenant remarked. "We had a little entertainment of our own. Do you see that square?" and he swung the barrel of the telescope so that it commanded a cobble-paved *place,* with a small fountain in the centre, flanked on three sides by rows of red-brick dwellings.

"I see it plainly," I told him.

"The Boches are evidently billeting their men in those houses," he continued. "Yesterday morning an army baker's cart drove into the square and the soldiers came piling out of

the houses to get their bread ration. There was quite a crowd of them around the cart, so I phoned back to the gunners and they dropped a shell bang into the square. The soldiers scattered, of course, and the horse hitched to the cart took fright and ran away. The cart tipped over and the bread spilled out. After a few minutes the men came out of their cellars and began to gather up the bread, so we shelled 'em again. The next time they sent out the women to pick up the loaves. We let them alone—French women, you understand—until I saw the Huns beating the women and taking the bread away from them. That made me mad and for ten minutes we *strafed* that section of the town good and plenty. It was very amusing while it lasted. And," he added wistfully, "we don't get much amusement here."

Darkness had fallen, when cold and tired, we climbed stiffly into the waiting car. As we tore down the long, straight road which led to

General Headquarters the purple velvet of the eastern sky was stabbed by fiery flashes, many of them, and, borne on the night wind, came the sullen growling of the guns. As I stared out into the flame-pricked darkness there passed before me in imaginary review that endless stream of dauntless and determined men—mud-caked infantrymen, gunners, despatch riders, sappers, pioneers, motor-drivers, road-menders, mechanics, railway-builders—who form that wall of steel which Britain has thrown between Western Europe and the Hunnish hordes. Unyielding and undiscouraged they have stood, for close on three years, in winter and in summer, in heat and in cold, in snow and in rain, holding the frontier of civilization. And I knew that it was safe in their care.

VIII

WITH THE BELGIANS ON THE YSER

I HAD left the Belgian army late in the autumn of 1914, just at the close of that series of heroic actions which began at Liége and ended on the Yser, so that my return, two years later, was in the nature of a home-coming. But it was a home-coming deeply tinged with sadness, for many, oh, so many of the gallant fellows with whom I had campaigned in those stirring days before the trench robbed war of its picturesqueness, were in German prisons or lay in unmarked and forgotten graves before Namur and Antwerp and Termonde. The Belgians that I had left were dirty, dog-tired, and disheartened. They were short of food, short of ammunition, short of everything save valor. The picturesque but impractical uniforms they wore—the green tunics and cherry-colored breeches of the

Guides, the towering bearskins of the gendarmes, the shiny leather hats of the Carabinieri—were foul with blood and dirt.

As my car rolled across a canal bridge into that tiny triangle which is all that remains of free Belgium, a trim-looking trooper in khaki stepped from a sentry-box and, holding up an imperative hand, demanded to see my papers. Had it not been for the rosette of red-yellow-and-black enamel on his cap, and the colored regimental facings on his collar, I should have taken him for a British soldier.

"To what regiment do you belong?" I asked him.

"The First Guides, monsieur," he replied, returning my papers and saluting.

The First Guides! What memories the name brought back. How well I remembered the last time that I had seen those gallant riders, the pick and flower of the Belgian army, their comic-opera uniforms yellow with dust, crouching behind the hedgerows on the road to Alost, a pitifully thin screen of them,

holding off the Germans while their weary comrades tramped northward into Flanders on the great retreat. It was not easy to make myself believe that this smart, khaki-clad trooper before me belonged to that homeless band of rear-guard fighters who had marked with their dead the line of retreat from the Meuse to the Yser.

It was my first glimpse of the reconstituted Belgian army. In the two years that it has been holding the line on the Yser it has been completely reuniformed, re-equipped, reorganized. The result is a small but complete and highly efficient organism. The Belgian army consists to-day of six infantry and two cavalry divisions—a total of about 120,000 men—with perhaps another 80,000 being drilled in the various training camps at the rear. It has, of course, no great reserves to fall back upon, for the greater part of the nation is imprisoned, but the King and his generals, by unremitting energy, have produced a force which is as well disciplined and as completely equipped as can

be found anywhere on the front. When the day comes, as it surely will, when Berlin issues the orders for a general retirement, I shouldn't care to be the Germans who are assigned to the work of holding off the Belgians, for from the men who wear the red-yellow-and-black rosettes they need expect no pity.

Though the shortest of the lines held by the Allies, the Belgian front is, in proportion to the free Belgian population, much the longest. The northernmost sector of the Western Front, beginning at the sea and extending through Nieuport, a distance of only three or four miles, is held by the French; then come the twenty-three miles held by the Belgians, another two or three miles held by the French, and then the British. The Belgians occupy a difficult and extremely uncomfortable position, for these Flemish lowlands were inundated in order to check the German advance, and as a result they are in the midst of a vast swamp, which, in the rainy season, becomes a lake. They are, in fact, fighting under conditions

not encountered on any other front save in the Mazurian marshes. During the rainy season the gunners of certain batteries frequently work in water up to their waists. So wet is the soil that dugouts are out of the question, for they instantly become cisterns, so the Belgian engineers have developed a type of above-ground shelter which has concrete walls and a roof of steel rails, on top of which are laid several layers of sand-bags. Though these shelters afford their occupants protection from the fire of small-caliber guns, they are not proof against the heavy projectiles which the Germans periodically rain upon the Belgian trenches. As the soil is so soft and slimy as to be useless for defensive purposes, the trench-walls are for the most part built of sand-bags, which are, however, usually filled with clay, for sand must be brought by incredible exertions from the seashore. I was shown a single short sector on the Yser, where six million bags were used. For the floors of these shelters, as well as for innumerable other pur-

poses, millions of feet of lumber are required, which is taken up to the front over the network of light railways, some of which penetrate to the actual firing-line. If trench-building materials are scarce in Flanders, fuel is scarcer. Every stick of wood and every piece of coal burned on the front has to be brought from great distances and at great expense, so economy in fuel consumption is rigidly enforced. I remember walking through a trench with a Belgian officer one bitterly cold and rainy day last winter. In a corner of the trench a soldier in soaking clothes had piled together a tiny mound of twigs and roots and over the feeble flame was trying to warm his hands, which were blue with cold. To my surprise my companion stopped and spoke to the man quite sharply.

"We can't let one man have a fire all to himself," he explained as he rejoined me. "Wood is too scarce for that. The fire that fellow had would have warmed three or four men and I had to reprimand him for building

it." A moment later he added: "The poor devil looked pretty cold, though, didn't he?"

I had been informed by telephone from the Belgian *État-Major* that a staff-officer would meet me at a certain little frontier town whose name I have forgotten how to spell. After many inquiries and wrong turnings, for in this corner of Belgium the Flemish peasantry understand but little French and no English, my driver succeeded in finding the town, but the officer who was to meet me had not arrived. It was too cold to sit in the car with comfort, so a lieutenant of gendarmerie, the chief of the local *Sûreté,* invited me to make myself comfortable in his little office. After a time the conversation languished, and, for want of something better to say, I inquired how far it was to Ostend. I was interested in knowing, because during the retreat of the Belgian army in October, 1914, I left two kit-bags filled with perfectly good clothes at the American Consulate in Ostend. They are there still, I sup-

pose, provided the Consulate has not been shelled to pieces by the British monitors or the bags stolen by German soldiers.

"Ostend?" repeated the gendarme. "It isn't over thirty kilometres from here. From the roof of this building, if the weather was fine, you could almost see its church-spires."

He walked across to the window and, pressing his face against the pane, stared out across the fog-hung lowlands. He so stood for some minutes and when he turned I noticed that tears were glistening in his eyes.

"My wife and children are over there in Ostend," he explained, in a voice which he tried pathetically hard to control. "At least, they were there two years ago last August. They had gone there for the summer. I was in Brussels when the Germans crossed the frontier, and I at once joined the army. I have never heard from my family since. It is very hard, monsieur, to be so near them—they are only thirty kilometres away—and not be able to see them or to hear from them, or even

be able to learn whether they are well or whether they have enough to eat."

It is a terrible thing, this prison wall within which the Germans have shut up the people of Belgium. How terrible it is one cannot realize until he has known those whose dear ones are confined *incommunicado* within that prison. I wish I might bring home to you, my friends, just what it means. How would *you* feel to stand on the banks of the Hudson and look across into New Jersey and know that, though over there, a few miles away, were your homes and those that you hold most dear, you could no more get word to them, or they to you, than if they were in Mars? And how would you feel if you knew that Englewood and Morristown and Plainfield and the Oranges, and a dozen other of the pretty Jersey towns, were but heaps of blackened ruins, that the larger cities were garrisoned by brutal German soldiery and ruled by heartless German governors, and that thousands of women and girls—perhaps *your* wife, *your* daughters

among them—had been dragged from their homes and taken God knows where? How would you feel then, Mr. American?

After an hour's wait my officer, profuse in his apologies, arrived in a beautifully appointed limousine, beside which the British staff-car in which I had come looked cheap and very shabby. At the very beginning of the war the Belgian military authorities commandeered every car they could lay their hands on, and though many have been worn out and hundreds were lost during the retreat, they are still rather better supplied with luxurious cars than any of the other armies.

"There will be a moon to-night," said my cicerone, "so before going to La Panne, where quarters have been reserved for you, I shall take you to Furnes. The Grande Place is pure Spanish—it was built in the Duke of Alva's time, you know—and it is very beautiful by moonlight."

The road to Furnes took us through what

had been, a few years before, quaint Flemish villages, but German *Kultur,* aided by the products of Frau Bertha Krupp, had transformed the beautiful sixteenth-century architecture into heaps of brick and stone. And nowhere did I see a church left standing. Whether the Germans shelled the churches because they honestly believed that their towers were used for observation purposes, or from sheer lust for destruction, I do not know. In any event, the churches are gone. In one little shell-torn village my companion pointed out to me the ruins of a church, amid which a company of infantry, going up to the trenches, had camped for the night. Just as the men were falling in at daybreak a German shell of large caliber exploded among them. Sixty-four—I think that was the number—were killed outright or died of their wounds. But not even the dead are permitted to sleep in peace. I saw several churchyards on which German shells had rained so heavily that the corpses had been disinterred, and whitened

bones and grinning skulls littered the ploughed-up ground.

Darkness had fallen when we came to Furnes. In passing through the outskirts, we stopped to call on two young women—an Irish girl and a Canadian—who, undismayed by the periodic shell-storms which visit it, have pluckily stayed in the town ever since the battle of the Yser, caring for the few hundred townspeople who remain, nursing the wounded, and even conducting a school for the children. They live in a small bungalow which the military authorities have erected for them on the edge of the town. A few yards from their front door is a bomb-proof, looking exactly like a Kansas cyclone-cellar, in which they find refuge when one of the frequent bombardments begins. We found that the young women were not at home. I was disappointed, because I wanted to tell them how much I admired them.

My companion was quite right in saying that the Grande Place of Furnes by moon-

light is worth seeing. It certainly is. The exquisite fifteenth-century buildings which face upon the square have, by some miracle, remained almost undamaged. There were no lights, of course, and the only person in sight was a sentry, on whose bayonet and steel helmet the moonbeams played fitfully. The darkness, the silence, the suggestion of mystery, the ancient buildings with their leaded windows and their carved façades, the steel-capped soldier, all made me feel that I had stepped back five hundred years and was in the Furnes of Inquisition times.

Our visit to Furnes had delayed us, so it was well into the evening before we drew up before the hotel in La Panne, where a room had been reserved for me by the Belgian *État-Major*. A seaside resort in midwinter is always a peculiarly depressing place, and La Panne was no exception. Though every hotel and villa in the place was chock-a-block with staff-officers, with nurses, and with wounded, the street-lamps were extinguished, not a ray

of light escaped from the heavily curtained windows, and, to add to the general sense of melancholy, a cold, raw wind was blowing down from the North Sea and a drizzling rain had set in. Though La Panne is within easy range of the German batteries, which could eliminate it with neatness and despatch, it has, singularly enough, never been bombarded, nor has it been subjected to any serious air raids. This is the more surprising as all the neighboring towns, as well as Dunkirk, a dozen miles beyond, have been repeatedly shelled and bombed. The only explanation of this phenomenon is that the Germans do not wish to kill the Queen of the Belgians—she was Princess Elisabeth of Bavaria, remember—who lives with the King at La Panne. It is possible that this may be the correct explanation. I remember that when I was in Brussels during the early days of the German occupation, there occurred a serious collision between Prussian and Bavarian troops, the latter asserting that the ill-mannered North German

soldiery had shown some disrespect to a portrait of "unsere Bayerische Prinzessin." Why the Germans should have any consideration for the safety of the Queen after the fashion in which they have treated her country and her people, only a Teutonic intellect could understand. But the exemption which La Panne has thus far enjoyed has not induced its inhabitants to omit any precautions. An ample number of bomb-proofs and dugouts have been constructed, and at night over all the windows are tacked thick black curtains. For they know the Germans.

La Panne is the last town on the Belgian littoral before you reach the French frontier and the last villa in the town is occupied by the King and Queen. It stands amid the sand-dunes, looking out across the Channel toward England. It is just such a square, plastered, eight-room villa as might be rented for the summer months by a family with an income of five thousand a year. The sentries who are on duty at its gates and the mounted

gendarmes who constantly patrol its immediate vicinity, are the only signs that it is the residence of royalty. Almost any morning you can see the King and Queen—he tall and soldierly, with all griefs and anxieties which the war has brought him showing in his face; she small and trim and girlishly slender—riding on the hard sands of the beach, or strolling, unaccompanied, amid the dunes. What must it mean to them to know that though over there to the eastward lies Belgium, *their* Belgium, they cannot ride five miles toward it before they are halted by the German bar; to know that beyond that little river where the trenches run their people are suffering and waiting for help, and that, after nearly three years, they are not a yard nearer to them?

How clearly I remembered the last time that I had seen the Queen. It was in the Hotel St. Antoine, in Antwerp, the night before the flight of the Government and the royal family to Ostend, and less than a week before the fall of the city itself. For days

past the grumble of the guns had constantly been growing louder, the streams of wounded had steadily increased; every one knew that the end was almost at hand. It was just before the dinner-hour and the great lobby of the hotel was crowded with officers—Belgian, French, and British—with members of the fugitive Government and Diplomatic Corps, and a few unofficial foreigners like myself. Then, unannounced and unaccompanied, the Queen entered. She had come to say farewell to the invalid wife of the Russian Minister, who was unable to go to the palace. She remained in the Russians' apartments (during the bombardment, a few days later, they were completely wrecked by a German shell) half an hour perhaps. Then she came down the winding stairs, a pathetically girlish figure in the simplest of white suits, leaning on the arm of the gallant old diplomat. Quite automatically the throng in the lobby separated, so as to form an aisle down which she passed. To those of us who were nearest she put out her

hand and, bending low, we kissed it. Then the great doors were opened and she passed out into the darkness and the rain—a Queen without a country.

No one comes away from La Panne, at least no one should, without having visited the great hospital founded by Dr. Léon du Page, the famous Belgian surgeon. It started in one of the big tourist hotels facing on the sea, but it has gradually expanded until it now occupies a whole congeries of buildings. It has upward of a thousand beds, but, as the fighting was comparatively light at the time I was there, only about two-thirds of them were occupied. Though the American Ambulance at Neuilly, and some of the hospitals at the British base-camps are larger, Dr. du Page's hospital is the most complete and self-contained that I have seen on any front. To mend the broken men who are brought there no device of medical science has been left untried. There are giant magnets which are used to draw minute

steel fragments from the brains of men wounded by shrapnel; there are beds, heated by hundreds of electric lights, for soldiers whose vitality has been dangerously lowered by shock or exhaustion; there is a department of facial surgery where men who have lost their noses or their jaws or even their faces are given new ones. The hospital is, as I have said, self-contained. The operating-tables, the beds, all the furniture, in fact, is made on the premises. It is the only hospital I know of which provides those patients who have lost their legs with artificial limbs. And they are by far the best artificial limbs that I have seen anywhere. Each one is made to order to match the man's remaining limb. They are shaped over plaster casts, according to a system originated by Dr. du Page, in alternate layers of glue and ordinary shavings, and the articulation of the joints almost equals that of nature. As a result the soldiers are sent out into the world provided with legs which are symmetrical, almost unbreakable, amazingly

light, and so admirably constructed that the owner rarely requires the assistance of a cane. Another detail for which Dr. du Page has made provision is the manufacture of his own instruments. Before the war the best surgical instruments were made in Germany. There were, so far as Dr. du Page knew, only five first-class instrument-makers in Belgium. Three of these were, he ascertained, in the army, so through the King he obtained their release from military duty. Now they work in a completely equipped shop in the rear of the hospital making the shiny, terrifying instruments which the white-clad surgeons wield with such magical effect.

Should you feel like giving up the theatre this evening, or taking a street-car instead of a taxi, or not opening that bottle of champagne, the money would be very welcome to Dr. du Page and his wounded. Should you feel that that is too much to give, it might be well for you to remember that he has given something, too. He gave his wife. She was

returning from America, where she had gone to collect funds to carry on the work of the hospital. She sailed on the *Lusitania*. . . .

To reach the Belgian firing-line is not easy because, the country being as flat as a ball-room floor, the Germans see and shoot at you. So one needs to be cautious. So dangerous is the terrain in this respect that the ambulances and motor-lorries and ammunition-trains could not get up to the trenches at all had not the Belgians, with great foresight, done wholesale tree-planting. Most people do not number nursery work among the duties of an army, but nowadays it is. From France and England the Belgians imported many saplings, thousands if not tens of thousands of them, and set them out along the roads exposed to German fire, and now their foliage forms a screen behind which troops and transport can move with comparative safety. In places where trees would not grow the roads have been masked for miles with screens made from

branches. To have one of these screens between you and the Germans is very comforting.

On our way up to the front we made a détour in order that I might call on a friend, Mrs. A. D. Winterbottom, who, before her marriage to a British officer, was Miss Appleton of Boston. In "Fighting in Flanders" I told about a very brave deed which I saw performed by Mrs. Winterbottom. She was quite angry with me for mentioning it, but because she is an American of whom her countrypeople have every reason to be proud, I am going to tell about it again. It was during the last days of the siege of Antwerp. The Germans had methodically pounded to pieces with their great guns the chain of barrier forts encircling the city. Waelhem was one of the last to fall. When at length the remnant of the garrison evacuated the fort they brought back word that a score of their comrades, too badly wounded to walk, remained within the battered walls. So Mrs. Winterbottom, who

had brought over from England her big touring-car and was driving it herself, said quietly that she was going to bring them out. The only way to reach the fort was by a straight and narrow road, a mile long, on which German shells were bursting with great accuracy and frequency. To me and to the Belgian officers who were with me, it looked like a short-cut to the cemetery. But that didn't deter Mrs. Winterbottom. She climbed into her car and threw in the clutch and jammed her foot down on the accelerator, and went tearing down that shell-spattered highway at top speed. She filled her car with wounded men and brought them safely back, and then returned and gathered up the others who were still alive. I have seen few braver deeds.

Mrs. Winterbottom remained with the Belgian army throughout the great retreat into Flanders, and when it settled down into the trench life on the Yser, she was officially attached to a division, with which she has remained ever since, moving when her division

moves. She lives in a one-room shack which the soldiers have built her immediately in the rear of the trenches and within range of the enemy's guns. Her only companion is a dog, yet she is as safe as though she were on Beacon Hill, for she is the idol of the soldiers. She has a large recreation tent, like the side-show tent of a circus, but painted green to escape the attention of the German airmen, and in this tent she entertains the men during their brief periods of leave from the trenches. She gives them coffee, cocoa, milk, and biscuits; she provides them with writing materials—I forget how many thousand sheets of paper and envelopes she told me that they used each week; and she keeps them supplied with reading matter. Three times a week she gives "her boys" a phonograph concert in the first-line trenches. You must have experienced the misery and monotony of existence in the trenches to understand what these "concerts" mean to the tired and homesick men. I asked her if there was anything that the people at

home could send her, and she replied rather hesitantly (for she is personally bearing the entire expense of this work) that she understood that some small metal phonographs were procurable which could easily be carried about and would not warp from dampness, for the trenches on the Yser are very wet. She also said that she would welcome phonograph records of any description and French books. The last I saw of her she was wading through a sea of mud, in rubber boots and a rubber coat and a sou'wester, to carry her "canned music" to the men on the firing-line. They ought to be very proud of Mrs. Winterbottom back in her own home town.

The Belgian trenches are very much like those on other sectors of the Western Front, except that they are made of sand-bags instead of earth, are muddier and are nearer the enemy, being separated from the German positions, for a considerable distance, only by the Yser, which in places is only forty yards across. In fact, a baseball player could easily

sling a stone across the river into Dixmude, or what remains of it, for, like most of the other Flemish towns, it is now only a blackened skeleton. Many cities have been destroyed in the course of this war, but none of them, unless it be Ypres, so nearly approaches complete obliteration as Dixmude. Pompeii is a living, breathing city compared to it. Despite all that has been printed about the devastation in the war zone, I believe that when the war is over and the hordes of curious Americans flock Europeward, they will be stunned by the completeness of the desolation which the Germans have wrought in northeastern France and Belgium.

By far the most interesting day I spent on the Belgian front was not in the trenches but in a long, low, wooden building well to the rear. Over the door was a sign which read: "Section Photographique de l'Armée Belge." Here are brought to be developed and enlarged and scrutinized the hundreds of photographs which are taken daily by Belgian avi-

ators flying over the German lines. In no department of war work has there been greater progress during recent months than in photography by airplane. Every morning at break of dawn scores of Belgian machines—and the same is true all down the Western Front—rise into the air, and for hour after hour swoop and circle over the enemy's lines, taking countless photographs of his positions by means of specially made cameras fitted with telescopic lenses. (The Allied fliers on the Somme took seventeen hundred photographs during a single day.) Most of these photographs are taken at a height of eight thousand to ten thousand feet,* though very much lower, of course, when an opportunity presents itself, and always with the camera as nearly vertical

* In order to keep pace with the steady improvement in range and accuracy of anti-aircraft artillery, aviators have found it necessary to operate at constantly increasing altitudes, so that it is now not uncommon for aerial combats to be fought at a height of 20,000 feet. Hence, many airplanes are now equipped with oxygen-bags for use in the rarefied atmosphere of the higher levels. The aviators operating on the Italian front experience such intense cold during the winter months that a system has been evolved for heating their caps, gloves, and boots by electricity generated by the motor.

as possible. As soon as an aviator has secured a sufficient number of pictures of the locality or object which he has been ordered to photograph, he wings his way back to his own lines, the plates are immediately developed at the headquarters of the Section Photographique or in a dark room on wheels. If the first examination of the negative reveals anything of interest, it is at once enlarged, often to eight times the size of the original. As a result of this remarkable system of aerial espionage, there is nothing of importance which the Germans can long conceal from the Allies. They cannot extend their trench lines by so much as a yard, they cannot construct new positions, they cannot mount a machine-gun without the fact being registered by those eyes which, from dawn to dark, peer down at them from the clouds. At all of the divisional headquarters are large plans of the opposing enemy trenches, which are corrected daily by means of these airplane photographs and by the information collected through the elaborate sys-

tem of espionage which the Allies maintain behind the German lines. To deceive the aerial observers, each side resorts to all manner of ingenious tricks. To suggest an impending retirement, columns of men are marched down the roads which lead to the rear; trenches which are not intended to be used are dug; and there are, of course, hundreds of dummy guns, some of which actually fire. The officer in command of the Belgian Photographic Section had heard that I was in Dunkirk in May, 1915, when it was shelled by a German naval gun, at a range of twenty-three and one-half miles.* So he gave me as a souvenir of the experience a photograph, taken from the air, of the gun emplacement after it had been discovered and bombed by the Allied aviators, and the gun removed to a place of safety. I reproduce the photograph herewith. The numerous white spots all about the emplacement are the craters caused by the bombs which were rained upon it.

* For an account of this, the longest-range bombardment in history, see Mr. Powell's "Vive la France!"

Another of these monster guns was so ingeniously concealed in an imitation thicket that for a fortnight or more it defied the efforts of scores of airmen to locate it. Though hundreds of airplane photographs of the country behind the German trenches were brought in and minutely examined, there was nothing about them to suggest the hiding-place of a gun of so large a caliber until some one called attention to the deep ruts left by motor-trucks which had left the highway at a certain point and turned into the innocent-looking patch of woods. Why were the wheel-ruts shown on the plate so black? Because the vehicle must have sunk deep into the soft soil. Why did it sink so deeply? Because it was heavily laden. Laden with what? With large-caliber shells, perhaps. But still it was only a supposition. A few days later, however, it was noticed that at a certain point on the westward edge of that patch of woods there seemed to be a slight discoloration. This discoloration became more pronounced on later photographs which were

brought in. Every one in the Section Photographique hazarded a guess as to its cause. At length some one suggested that it looked as though the leaves of the trees had been burned. But what burned them? There was only one answer. The fiery blast from a big gun hidden amid those trees, of course! Acting on that hypothesis, a score of aviators were sent out with orders to pour upon the wood a torrent of high explosive. The next few hours must have been very uncomfortable for the German gun-crew. In any event, the big piece was hauled out of danger under cover of darkness and the bombardments of the towns behind the Belgian lines abruptly ceased.

The Allied air service does not confine its observations to the trenches; it keeps an ever-wakeful eye on all that is in progress in the regions for many miles behind the front. To illustrate how little escapes the eye of the camera, the officer in charge of the Photographic Section showed me a series of photographs

which had been taken of a village at the back of Dixmude, a few days previously, from a height of more than a mile. The first picture showed an ordinary Flemish village with its gridiron of streets and buildings. Cutting diagonally across the picture was a straight white streak which I knew to be a road leading into the country. At one point on this road were a number of tiny squares—evidently a row of workmen's cottages. The commandant handed me a powerful magnifying-glass. "Look very closely on that road," he said, "and you will see three specks." I saw them. They were about the size of pin-points.

"Those are three men," he continued. "The man at the right lives in the first of this row of cottages. The man in the middle lives in the fourth house in the row. But the man at the left is a farmer, and lives in this isolated farmhouse out here in the country."

"A very clever guess," I remarked, scepticism showing in my tone, I fear.

"We do not guess in this business," he

replied reprovingly. "We *know*." And he handed me the next photograph, taken a few seconds later. There was no doubt about it; the pin-point of a man at the right had left his two companions and was turning in at the first of the row of cottages. Another photograph was produced. It showed the second man entering the gate of the fourth cottage. And the final picture of the series showed the remaining speck plodding on alone toward his home in the country.

"An officer of some importance is evidently making this house his headquarters," remarked the commandant, indicating another tiny rectangle. "If he wasn't of some importance he wouldn't have a telephone."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "You don't mean to tell me that you can photograph a telephone-wire from a mile in the air?"

"Not quite," he admitted, "but sometimes, if the light happens to be right, we can get photographs of its shadow."

And sure enough, stretching across the

ploughed fields, I could see, through the glass, a phantom line, intersected at regular intervals by short and somewhat thicker lines. It was the shadow of a field-telephone and its poles! And the airplane from which that photograph was taken was so high that it must have looked like a mere speck to one on the ground. There's war magic for you.

You will ask, of course, why the Germans don't maintain over the Allied lines a similar system of aerial observation. They do—when the Allies let them. But the Allies now have in commission on the Western Front such an enormous number of aircraft—I think I have said elsewhere the French alone probably have close to seven thousand machines—and they have made such great improvements in their anti-aircraft guns that to-day it is a comparatively rare thing to see a German flier over territory held by the Allies. The moment that a German flier takes the air, half a dozen Allied airmen rise to meet and engage him, and, in the rare event of his being able to elude

them and get over the Allied lines, the "Archies," as the anti-aircraft guns are called on the British front, get into noisy action. (Their name, it is said, came from a London music-hall song which was exceedingly popular at the beginning of the war. When the shells from the German A. A. guns burst harmlessly around the British airmen they would hum mockingly the concluding line of the song: "Archibald, certainly not!") Unable to keep their fliers in the air, the Germans are to all intents and purposes blind. They are unable to regulate the fire of their artillery or to direct their infantry attacks; they do not know what damage their shells are doing; and they have no means of learning what is going on behind the enemy's lines. It is obvious, therefore, that to have and keep control of the air is a very, very important thing.

No one who has been in Europe during the past two years can have failed to notice the unpopularity of the Belgians among the

French and English. This is regrettable but true. Also it is unjust. When I left Belgium in the late autumn of 1914 the Belgians were looked on as a nation of heroes. They were acclaimed as the saviors of Europe. Nothing was too good for them. The sight of a Belgian uniform in the streets of London or Paris was the signal for a popular ovation. When the red-black-and-yellow banner was displayed on the stage of a music-hall the audience rose en masse. The story of the defense of Liége sent a thrill of admiration round the world. But in the two and a half years that have passed since then there has become noticeable among French and English — particularly among the English—a steadily growing dislike for their Belgian allies; a dislike which has, in certain quarters, grown into a thinly veiled contempt. I have repeatedly heard it asserted that the Belgian has been spoiled by too much charity, that he is lazy and ungrateful and complaining, that he has become a pro-

fessional pauper, that he has been greatly overrated as a fighter, and that he has had enough of the war and is ready to quit.

The truth of the matter is this: The majority of the Belgians who fled before the advancing Germans belonged to the lower classes; they were for the most part uneducated and lacking in mental discipline. Is it any wonder, then, that they gave way to blind panic when the stories of the barbarities practised by the invaders reached their ears, or that their heads were turned by the hysterical enthusiasm, the lavish hospitality, with which they were received in England? That as a result of being thus lionized, many of these ignorant and mercurial people became fault-finding and overbearing, there is no denying. Nor can it be truthfully gainsaid that, for a year or more after the war began, there hung about the London restaurants and music-halls a number of young Belgians who ought to have been with their army on the firing-line.

But, if my memory serves me rightly, I think that I saw quite a number of English youths doing the same thing. Every country has its slackers, and Belgium is no exception. But to attempt to belittle the glorious heroism of the Belgian nation because of a few young slackers or the ingratitude and ill-manners of some ignorant peasants, is an unworthy and despicable thing. The assertion that the Belgians are lacking in courage is as untruthful as it is cruel. Ask the Germans who charged up the fire-swept slopes of Liége—those of them left alive—if the Belgians are cowards. Ask those who saw the fields of Aerschot and Vilvorde and Termonde and Malines strewn with Belgian dead. Go stand for a few days—and nights—beside the Belgians who are holding those mud-filled trenches on the Yser. And remember that the Belgians were fighting while the English were still only talking about it. Nor forget that, had not their heroic resistance given France a breathing-spell in

which to complete her tardy mobilization, the Germans would now, in all probability, be in Paris. The truth is that the civilized world owes to the Belgians a debt which it can never repay. We of America are honored to be counted among their Allies.

DOVER
DUNKIRK
Thielt
Brighton
Hastings
Strait of Dover
Rousselaere
CALAIS
Bergues
Ypern
St. Omer
Hazebrouck
Boulonge
Roubaix
LILLE
Bethune
Lens
Douai
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Arras
Beaumont
Albert
Somme
Dieppe
Amiens
Perronne
ST. QUENTIN
LE HAVRE
Rouen
Beauvais
Soissons
Oise
Compiegne
Seine
ST. DENIS
PARIS
VERSAILLES
Seine
F R A
LE MANS
ORLEANS
Auxerre
Blois
Loire
TOURS
Cher
Vienne
Bourges
Nevers

COLOGNE
Maastrich
Bonn
Aix la Chapelle
LIEGE
Verviers
Marburg
Rhine
Lahn
COBLENZ
FRANKFORT
Wiesbaden
Main
Mainz
Darmstadt
Neufchateau
Worms
Sedan
LUXEMBURG
Treves
MANHEIM
Montmedy
Mosel
Zweibrücken
Meuse
VERDUN
Saarbruck
Rhine
KARLSRUHE
Aire
METZ
Pont a Mousson
St. Mihiel
STUTTGART
Bar le Duc
NANCY
STRASSBURG
Toul
Luneville
St. Die
Schlettstadt
Épinal
Colmar
Chaumont
Freiburg
Sulz
Mühlhausen
BELFORT
Rhine
Basel
ZURICH
DIJON
Besançon
Luzern
Saonne
Doubs
BERN
CHALONS
GERMANY
SWITZERLAND